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# RELIGION IN OUR TIMES

*By*  
GAIUS GLENN ATKINS

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To J. McC.

WHO WILL REMEMBER, BECAUSE HE SHARED IT,  
THE TORCHLIT PROCESSION THROUGH THE MT.  
HERMON PINES, AND WHOSE FRIENDSHIP, NOW  
EXACTLY CONTERMINOUS WITH THE YEARS  
HERE RECORDED, HAS BEEN A LIGHT WHICH  
CAST NO SHADOWS, THIS BOOK IS AFFECTION-  
ATELY DEDICATED.



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## INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK was undertaken at the request of the publisher. There was, he believed, a place for a history of American religious life in our own times—a history not exactly brought down to date but trying to get into some kind of order and perspective, movements and events which most of us remember or of which we have heard from those who shared them. He was, I suspect, led to ask for such a book through his observation of the place which books dealing in the same way with phases of our social and political life since the beginning of the century had made for themselves. Since religion is so significant and creative an aspect of the life of any period, it seemed to deserve something of its own.

The writers who have been of late appraising American life either by way of criticism, analysis or remembrance had been strangely negligent of religion as an historical and social force. Some dramatic incident, like the Dayton trial, has for a page or two focused their attention, but the vaster and far more significant drama of religion in its action with the forces which are recasting the modern mind has been left unconsidered and, I suppose, for the best of reasons. The action is not yet complete; the forces involved are so imponderable, and it has been so largely a drama of faith and doubt confined to what is more hidden than revealed in the life of a generation. How can it all, with its undetermined issues, be made into history now or ever?

Probably it cannot, but the more evident ways in which religion has sought to readjust its own life to changing conditions, to find new motivations for its age-old task, can, even now, be a little told. Perhaps the reader will see through and behind it all some play of more elusive forces whose

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bearing upon society and conduct cannot be easily traced but certainly ought not to be overlooked. For they have hitherto been among the greatest influences in shaping human society. I think for all their elusiveness they are still the greatest.

I agreed with the publisher, therefore, that he had a first-class idea. I had grave doubts of anyone's being able to do it adequately and I undertook reluctantly a task which was, in the nature of it, laborious enough and likely in the accomplishment of it to be twice hindered; once by the demanding range of the subject, once by the limitations of the writer. But no one, I think, with a sincere interest in religion, a life-long association with it, an incurable concern for history and a lively interest in his own times, along with some habit of writing, would have refused to do what the editor asked. Which is the author's *Apologia* for this book. The publisher may write his own—or leave it unwritten.

With a reasonable freedom to date the period studied, I have chosen the forty years from 1892 to 1932. Naturally, I fancy, because they are coincident with my own recollection and observation, more logically because with a little margin backward they seem to constitute a distinct epoch. The roots of a good deal here considered actually lie in the period before 1892 but by that time, to continue the figure, what was to spring from them had begun to be evident. Nineteen thirty-two has been taken as a terminal just because the account must stop there. Nothing could be more unfinished, though the forces now in action are likely, unless there is some crisis-readjustment in the whole of American life, to continue as they are for a period and in much their present form.

The sources are all indicated and due acknowledgment given but in an unescapable way the substance has been organized out of the author's own knowledge and impressions of the period. I can say of a great deal which follows, as any

## INTRODUCTION

man can say of what took place during his own adult life, "All of which I saw." The rest of the quotation is inapplicable though perhaps the fact that one's own participation in the action of a time has been of little moment makes him more disengaged and just in the estimate of it.

Most of the actors hereinafter named I have seen or heard, many of them I have known. A book which deals with living folk must be both kind and careful; I have tried to be both. A book which deals historically with controversial matters still hot to the touch must try to be impartial. If I have failed in that—I am sorry. Any man who writes of what has been so largely of the very stuff of his own life interest and occupation may be permitted now and then to stop and meditate and moralize a little as though he were dealing with his own vanished years. I have availed myself of that privilege; the reader may substitute for such passages his own meditations and moralizations. They will likely be more to the point.

If I were to criticize the completed book myself, I should say again it is too pragmatic. These pages deal too inadequately with the deeper, more significant drama, the drama of inherited faith face to face with all the elements which are recasting our minds and retempering our souls. Little things have often been told when all the while there was beneath and behind them august and inexorable movements upon which great issues depend—the drama of the soul itself. But who can fix that upon any printed page? The poet maybe; the dramatist possibly; the great interpreters certainly who see an epoch only when it is done and time has distilled its imperishable essence for them to seize and use.

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS.

Huntington House,  
Auburn, New York,  
August the Twenty-Ninth,  
Nineteen Hundred and Thirty-Two.



## CHAPTER I

### THE TWILIGHT OF REVIVALISM

IN THE EARLY WINTER of 1892 the students of a famous boys' school marched a mile through the dark to their railway station. Their smoky torches cast a play of light and shadow through the pines, their band made brazen echoes, the lonely station with the hills above it and a curbed well with a sweep beside it came to life as they crowded road and platform. Mount Hermon School was welcoming home Dwight L. Moody. He was received as one delivered from a mortal peril of which Northfield had become increasingly fearful. The liner on which he had started weeks before from England had broken her single screw shaft in midocean and, with the chances much against her and no wireless to tell the seas her danger, had been found and towed back to Queenstown.

The man who bowed his acknowledgments to three hundred shouting boys and the delirious band was fifty-five years old, his air and beard strongly touched with gray, his figure massive, his bearing instinct with command. He was at the peak of his long career and his astounding force, better known throughout the English-speaking world than any other religious leader—though he was a layman unordained with any ordination save a passion for souls, a flame-like faith, a sovereignty of speech and wisdom and an ascendancy of purpose which made him the master of any situation in which he was involved.

He told his story of peril and deliverance in Northfield Church the next Sunday as simply as English words can be used and as a father talks to his children. Like St. Paul he had taken moral command of the ship. He had read the 91st Psalm with his arm around a pillar in the saloon, "He shall

give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," and thereafter his soul had been at rest. He believed the road was short from a helpless vessel to heaven. He was not, he said, afraid to die. No man had a finer courage. He had been under fire with the sanitary commissions of the Civil War, he had sought the dying in smallpox epidemics. "Wherever doctors will go," he once said, "to save men's bodies, I will go to save their souls." But he had been greatly concerned for his family and, more than anything else besides his wife and children, for his schools. He had, he said, found refuge and relief in prayer, his God had "heard his cry out of the depths and delivered him from his fears." He no more doubted that God had heard and answered his prayer than he doubted his own existence. He had left the issue in the hand of the Eternal and had been brought to his desired haven.<sup>1</sup>

Moody's concern for his schools when his chance of ever seeing them again seemed very small was a significant revelation of his far-seeing mind. They were his own creation, his constructive reaction to needs and situations. He had established the school for girls because he had seen girls in the hills back of Northfield with no opportunity for even a high school education; the school for boys had grown—as much as anything else—out of his interest in the young men converted in his meetings who were beginning their new life with a pitiful furnishing of learning. The first students at Mount Hermon were from England.

He made the costs (to the students) low, he saved their self-respect by setting them to work two hours a day; they

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<sup>1</sup> A full account of this experience may be found in Chapter 58 of the life of Moody by his son, W. R. Moody, (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1930). But the writer, then a teacher at Mount Hermon School, marched in that torch-lit procession and heard Moody's account in Northfield Church. General Oliver Otis Howard, himself the most devout of men, was a fellow passenger of Moody's on the *Spree*. Years later when I asked General Howard about his experience, he made a rather less dramatic affair of it. "I felt," he said, "that we would get through some way."

cooked and cleaned and washed dishes, milked, chopped wood, and picked up stones from rough hillsides plowed by straining oxen. He made it possible for a man of thirty to study geography alongside a boy of sixteen and feel no shame—but rather pride—in doing it. Forty years ago his schools were almost the only places in America where this could be done. He chose young people who in need and situation and character suited his purpose. The Bible had been his history and his science, the infallible word of God, final in authority and an answer to every human spiritual need. He, therefore, made the Bible a required study. But he had a sound feeling for sound learning; he demanded good teaching, hard work and tested results. As “Moody’s boys”—and girls—began to go to college, they more than held their own in the most demanding colleges and universities. Some of his methods were already native to the Connecticut Valley through the genius of Mary Lyon, but others were the contribution of his original mind.

## I

The man who had gone from Northfield—untaught in books though deeply schooled in labor and poverty—remembered the limited opportunities of his own boyhood and made of his schools doors through which, for more than a half century, generations of youth have passed to ample life and usefulness. Northfield had been the home of Moodys and Holtons since it began as an imperiled frontier settlement, the most northern English outpost in the Connecticut Valley. The men and women who settled it left their children’s children brave memories, tenacity of character and restless energy. Moody spent his boyhood there, the sixth son of a widowed mother. The mountains, which furnished his first horizons, the meadows, the long elm-shaded street, the noble river, were his earliest recollections and his abiding joy.

He grew a boy again when he came home. Drummond



called Moody the "greatest human" he had ever known. Northfield itself called out Moody's humanity in ways which lend to his biography a wealth of color hardly paralleled in the lives of great religious leaders. Finney at the height of his power sent the girls in the weave-sheds of Utica mills into hysterics by the hypnotic spell of his presence. Moody of a Sunday asked the girls of his Seminary to "trust and not be afraid," and by Tuesday had given them an unexpected holiday. He ruled conferences of the devout with the hand of steel in the glove of silk or else, having started a tug of war between Mount Hermon teams, tied his end of the rope to a tree and went off in great gusts of laughter. He had a just and very human pride in what he had done for Northfield and found therein another pragmatic demonstration of the power of his gospel.<sup>2</sup> This may and does, I think, explain his dominant interest in his Northfield enterprises toward the end of life. They were, besides, growing rapidly; they demanded large financial support for which he was responsible and they furnished a congenial outlet for his tireless energy.

Fundamentally they reflected his matured judgment (backed by an experience unique in his field and time) that the era of revivalism was approaching its natural term, and that religious education was due to take its place. I would not press this too far, though his biographers generally maintain it. There was a commanding evangelical note in Northfield education. Jowett, the master of Balliol, is said to have given one of his undergraduates the alternative of ceasing to be an atheist by tea-time or leaving Oxford. Northfield rather insisted upon conversion as a condition of finishing the course, and it usually came off. Moody's own dealing with the souls of boys and girls was a marvel of wise and tender understand-

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<sup>2</sup> He said once to the writer in the discussion of a more liberal form of faith, "What has Unitarianism done for Northfield?" and with a wave of the hand dismissed the matter.

ing (though some of his understudies were less urbane, and his technique, in the hands of the students themselves, lacked finish). Northfield, also, through conferences of college students and Christian workers, became and has continued to be an outstanding center of religious influence. Moody had a sure faculty for finding men who served his purpose and brought to his platform year after year the outstanding evangelical preachers of England and the United States.

It was the last apotheosis of the camp meeting. The pleasant Seminary campus was white with tents, the school dormitories sheltered the less adventurous, the Northfield hotel supplied the well-to-do (who trusted Moody and wrote him generous checks) with conditions de luxe for the culture of their souls. A well-filled day began with early prayer meetings, continued through forenoon sessions of Bible exposition and the best preaching England or America could furnish, and passed by way of a sunset meeting on Round Top, for which the beauty of the valley and the hills supplied an unequalled setting, to an evening meeting whose lights, through the open doors of the auditorium, washed the grass and trees while the hills gave back the exultant strains of gospel hymns. The next day the *New York Times* furnished a full report of it all. Nothing could have been more decorous or more prosperously peaceful. McKinley was president of the United States. Andrew Carnegie had written *Triumphant Democracy*. God was in His heaven and all was right with the world.

## II

It was a far cry from Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards and the Gasper River camp meeting<sup>8</sup> to the Northfield conferences but the connection can be traced with no important breaks, and revivalism was the continuing and binding ele-

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<sup>8</sup> See in general *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, F. M. Davenport, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1905.

ment. The Magna Carta of revivalism is the account of the Day of Pentecost. The imagination of the Church has always been mastered by that recital of a power like wind and flame to take and shake and change men and women in an hour and add to the fellowship of the devout crowds of "such as should be saved." The churches undertook, in their observance of the nineteen hundredth anniversary of Pentecost, to duplicate the experience. But it was, apparently, an affair which cannot be organized by modern methods, and the proposed twentieth century addendum to the Book of Acts remains to be written.

Revivals are not necessarily confined to religion. An apostle on fire with his cause and possessing an unusual power to gather and sway crowds can start a revival for free silver, prohibition, peace or war, the destruction of a Bastille or the end of the world. Fervent speech carrying an appeal for immediate decision or action is about the oldest, most direct and most effective vehicle for any cause. It needs nothing save the cause, the apostle and the crowd—the wind and flame soon follow. Religion has, through the very nature of it, furnished all the elements which make a revival possible and has used the revival method consistently. After a long period of neglect, revivalism was reborn in America, developed its technique, became an outstanding characteristic of American Christianity, and supplied the evangelical Protestant churches their principal way of growth.

The blowing of these spiritual winds began with Jonathan Edwards in the winter of 1734 and 1735. About this time John and Charles Wesley were leaving Oxford for Georgia under the disfavor of the authorities for having been too devout. About this time also George Whitefield, who had succeeded in borrowing ten pounds and getting a servitor's position at Pembroke, entered Oxford where he met the Wesleys at the "Holy Club." He had been admitted to Holy Orders by "good Bishop Benson," commending himself to his exam-

iners by his unaffected devotion. "I hope," he wrote, "the good of souls will be my only principle of action."<sup>4</sup> This unstudied hope was the keystone of the entire evangelical movement. All the epoch-making actors in a drama of the quest for souls which was to continue in action for a century and a half, include England and America, girdle the globe and prove rich in action, color and consequence were there upon the stage.

The curtain rose in Northampton, Massachusetts—an almost frontier community of farming folk supported by the rich meadows of the Ox-bow and for the first time in a hundred years economically secure and reasonably free from the fear of Indian raids. Three generations of hazardous pioneering had left their deposit in their very souls.<sup>5</sup> Their inhibitions were rigid, their interests limited. Sexual irregularities—always a frontier escape while the morality of the frontier brands them with a sinister sinfulness—were common. New England church records for the period show a high percentage of disciplinary cases involving such immorality though something must be allowed for the general severity of church discipline which was then taken seriously.

Edwards did not think Northampton people greatly different from the rest of the province but religion had fallen into a low estate and the youth of the time were "addicted to night walking and frequenting the tavern." They had also the habit of getting together "in conventions of both sexes for the mirth and jollity which they called frolicks . . . and indeed family government did much fail in the town." In addition the youth of Northampton devoted the evening after the Sabbath to mirth and company keeping and so dissipated the good influence of the public lecture.

Edwards brought the full force of the most intense per-

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<sup>4</sup> *George Whitefield The Awakener*, Albert D. Belden, Cokesbury Press, 1930, page 2.

<sup>5</sup> See Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, Chapter VIII.

sonality of his time to bear upon these frolicsome youth. He was himself enmeshed in a vast and somber theology of which he has always been considered the most distinguished American exponent. Its awesome circle included the sovereign decrees of a God who predestined some of His children to heaven and more to hell, who had indeed provided for the elect a way of redemption but whose justice whether He damned or saved was beyond question, inasmuch as the infinite sinfulness of a lost humanity had brought all the sons of Adam under condemnation, and any mitigation at all of their lawful doom was an extension of undeserved mercy.<sup>6</sup>

All this began, so Edwards believed, in the predetermined councils of the Eternal but it laid hold of Northampton folk very concretely in their fear of hell and the conviction of one of the most unusual intelligences in America then or since that, unless he could pluck them away from the pit, his parishioners would have short shrift from its flames. He possessed a gift rarely surpassed for the vivid portrayal of the pains of hell. "You have often seen a spider or some other noisome insect when thrown into the midst of a fierce fire and have observed how immediately it yields to the force of the flame. . . . Here is a little image of what you will be in hell except you repent and fly to Christ."

Imprisoned in an iron creed, driven by inexorable logic, a passion for souls and gleams of tenderness for the imperiled, Edwards brought all the force of such a gospel mediated through a personality of arresting ascendancy (all revivalists possess in relative degrees great personal ascendancy) upon his congregation. The detail of what followed does not belong to this narrative. Three hundred were converted, half of them men, one a child of four. A gentleman "of high stand-

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<sup>6</sup> See *Jonathan Edwards*, A. V. G. Allen, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1889. The dreary aspects of Edwards's theology ought by no means to be left unrelieved. He believed in the divine love and goodness as well, wrote many gracious passages and had a mystic's spirit.

ing" fell into a melancholia and cut his throat, and others had to fight the suggestive contagion of his example. The inevitable reaction followed: "Iniquity abounds, and the love of many has grown cold." (Edwards, 1744.) In 1748, after twenty years of his ministrations, his church turned against him. The bitterness with which this was accomplished, the charges and the counter-charges would seem to indicate that his congregation had learned of him more aptly in a mordant use of words than St. Paul's catalogue of the fruits of the spirit.

But for all that a new technique had been brought into American church life. He gave form to the need and character of "conversion" which persisted until it was challenged by psychology. He believed in an immediate and transforming action of the Divine Spirit upon the human soul. This action began in conviction of sin, proceeded through penitence and repentance and was made perfect in a religious experience. "At this time," Allen says, "neither the name [conversion] nor the process for which it stood were as familiar as they have since become."<sup>7</sup> The mystics, however, had long known the issue of their panting journey along the mystic way into some final region of joy and peace, and the main stages of that journey—negation, purgation and unification—are exactly what every revivalist asks his converts to undertake even if it be reduced to the "sawdust trail."

John Calvin also—to whom Edwards owed much—had insisted on the "witness of the Spirit" as the only sign that a man was fortunate enough to be numbered among the elect. But in specifying a vivid alternation of despair and hope as a necessary aspect of the momentous affair of getting saved, Edwards brought conversion to the front and made a religious experience valid and the only assurance of an authentic Christian life. He had a rare gift for setting forth the felicity of

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<sup>7</sup> A. V. G. Allen, *op. cit.*, page 35.

loving goodness and communion with God. He had himself experienced, he says, a most ravishing inward sweet sense of Christ and the work of redemption. There was thereafter "in sun and moon and stars; in clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers and trees; in the water and all nature" a new and moving beauty. Revivalism later set all this to quick tempo music and made a song of it, "Since Jesus Came Into My Heart." Only the psychologist and the theologian can reconcile Edwards's bright, mystic and rapturous passages about the "Sweet glory of God" with his "sinners in the hand of an angry God."

## III

At any rate, Edwards started something which became in one form or another the accepted message and method of evangelical Protestantism. The excitement of a revival furnished a bright relief to the gray monotony of village and country life. The churches approved its method of mass production. Ministers were quite willing to have their orthodoxy attacked, their efficiency questioned and be used as whipping-boys (a pretty constant habit of the revivalist) if only they could get new members into their churches. They have first and last borne a good deal from the evangelist with Christian forbearance in the hope that some good might come of it. Revivalism focused upon the one single business of saving souls every aspect of Christian doctrine. Presbyterians and Methodists approached the penitent at the mourners' bench from opposed theological hinterlands but they did about the same things with and for his soul.

An inerrant Bible furnished the evangelist his authority, man's fallen estate his opportunity, saving faith in Jesus Christ his way of salvation. The convert's own assurance of being saved through some sudden happiness and peace sealed the transaction and was the testimony that his name was written in the Book of Life. All this ought not to be dismissed too

lightly. It was an aspect of the most significant drama in which our humanity has ever played a part—the drama of the soul in its quest for deliverance. In one form or another every religion has staged it, the tensions of it are native to our entangled natures, and the protagonists, as faith has conceived them, are man and God, and there is always the Adversary. Every other interest is colorless alongside the issues involved. The action makes every other drama inconsequential. Heaven and hell are involved, and time itself becomes only a brief episode in which a timeless destiny was determined. All that Edwards did—and very likely without meaning to do so much—was to provide New England religious life, in which the force which had brought the Pilgrim to Plymouth and the Puritan to Massachusetts Bay was beginning to be spent, with a new test of the reality of the religious life and a new technique of religious appeal.

The colonial churches, Sweet says in his admirable *Story of Religions in America*,<sup>8</sup> had been “largely planted by religious radicals.” They were all seeking freedom from fretting or more positively hostile orders in Europe, they were all hoping to find a new heaven and a new earth in America. If they did not find it, they would make it. Also they had brought with them, in spite of their dissent, the more general religious inheritances of the Old World. The vast loneliness of the continent along whose shores they were grouped smothered their radicalism. How could they be radical against the sea in front and the forests behind? When the independent had established his system of polity on Cape Cod with none to forbid, it began, though he did not confess it, to grow less significant. The whole of religion could not consistently be reduced to being a Congregationalist. The Puritan, being free to do about as he pleased, began to wonder what to do with himself. He had

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<sup>8</sup> Harper & Brothers, New York, 1930, pages 2 *et seq.*



neither surplices, bishops nor prayer-books to protest against, and, having come with some secret loss of self-esteem through his unprofitable dealings with Quakers and Seekers, he began to face inevitable reactions and to find his religious organization in danger of breaking down through unforeseen contradictions in the very structure of it.<sup>9</sup>

Edwards did furnish New England Christianity a new point of departure and a generally renewing force. He recalled Puritanism to a searching concern for character and conduct. American revivalism as a whole has intensified the reaction of evangelical Protestantism against worldliness, though it has narrowed and rather over-simplified definitions of what worldliness really is. Puritanism after the Great Awakening became more ascetic. It trained its moral indignation, however, upon a rather narrow range of faults, and some of those of a relatively minor nature. The relation between revivalism and "temperance" movements belongs to another chapter. Evangelical religion has always demanded a rigid sexual integrity. And, since Edwards and the Wesleys, it has conducted a long running warfare with cards, dancing and the stage. The inadequacy of what Reinhold Niebuhr has called Protestant asceticism is beyond debate.

Whitefield continued in America and Charles Wesley in England what Edwards began, with a power to which he was not equal. The times were ripe for them and what they shaped and released. The ardor of the Reformation, the élan of sectarian expansion with its struggle for the rights of conscience in worship and the great adventure of finding religious freedom in a new world had all spent themselves. A lethargy had overtaken the soul of Anglicanism and the souls of the devout in America; the Age of Reason had left religion generally dried out. It needed to be recharged with emotion, and the

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<sup>9</sup> As for example the Half-way Covenant and how either to baptize or leave unbaptized the infant offspring of non-church members.

drama of it transferred from the contention of sects and creeds and the embattled struggles of Protestant and Catholic Europe to the embattled issues of the soul in its quest for deliverance. For religion began with just that, and one may gravely wonder whether, if that motif should permanently disappear, religion itself will permanently endure.

## IV

America offered, in the first third of the eighteenth century, a strategic field for the action of the renaissance of personal religion. Whitefield dealt directly with the colonies. The Wesleyan movement reached them through the irresistible growth of Methodism. Whitefield was the first great revivalist. No building could hold the crowds he assembled, his golden voice reached and moved the most distant auditor. He had a power of appeal to unbutton Franklin's pocket (unbuttoning pockets has always been one of the tests of the successful evangelist) and empty it of its gold and silver. And he had a passion for souls: "Do you ask what I am doing?" he wrote to John Wesley. "I answer, 'ranging and hunting in the American woods after poor sinners.'"<sup>10</sup> The frontier has always offered the revivalist an outstanding opportunity, and the America of Whitefield was all frontier.

He came to New England when the fires Edwards had kindled were dying down. He started them again but less witheringly. Edwards's gospel was too dark with terror; Whitefield's was bright with grace. "I found my heart drawn out to talk of scarce anything besides the consolations and privileges of the saints and the plentiful effusion of the Spirit upon believers,"<sup>11</sup> which must have been a relief to sinners lately in the hands of an angry God. Whitefield made seven visits to America and crossed the ocean thirteen times. He never

<sup>10</sup> *George Whitefield The Awakener*, page 83.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, page 113.

made his last voyage home. He was buried (1770) in the crypt beneath the pulpit of the Old South Presbyterian Church in Newburyport where his bones—wanting an arm—await the general resurrection whose terrors and rewards he had so often proclaimed. He had shaken England and America and left a mark upon American religion it has never escaped.

What Sweet calls "the nationalization of American churches"<sup>12</sup> took shape during and directly after the War for Independence. What Edwards, Whitefield and Wesleyanism had vitalized was then nationalized. The communions organized themselves according to temper, tradition and necessity but religion meant for them generally personal salvation, a laborious, orderly and frugal life, faithful attendance upon the means of grace and a due watchfulness against the sins of the flesh and the love of pleasure. A religious experience was the general condition of church membership. Revivalism was the recognized (and greatly desired) method of "winning souls" and building up churches. It had created its own technique of conviction, repentance and conversion often through great travail of soul. Often also through great travail of body and with strange accompaniments of hysterias. The system had worked out its own doctrinal supports—an infallible Bible, a lost humanity, the saving power of the Cross, the mystical (though it knew no such word then) reception and sharing of the Christ life.

The Second Awakening followed the frontier westward. The settlers who began, after the Revolution, to establish themselves beyond the Alleghany Mountains were generally Scotch-Irish. They had entered, for the most part, at the ports of Philadelphia and Charleston and were by the end of the eighteenth century holding a long strategic line along the watersheds from Pennsylvania south and west. The river valleys

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<sup>12</sup> *Story of Religions in America*, Chapter XIII.

beneath and before them were fashioned, by the contours of a continent, for roads into a world of boundless resource, high adventure, lawless liberty, back-breaking toil and brooding danger. The folk themselves have contributed the most virile and tenacious elements in the American racial fusion.

Some were Celt and Teuton mixed, shrewd, practical, emotional, militantly Protestant, tempered in the fires John Calvin kindled, theologians by divine right, born fighters and die-hard individualists. The frontier both made and broke them. Where unusual native force and economic opportunity combined to serve them they took masterful possession of land and minerals, prospered greatly and laid the foundations of great fortunes. They also achieved a fusion of religious conservatism and economic self-assertion at almost any cost, in which the gentler aspects of Christianity were much neglected and by which social conditions were created with which American religion in the last four decades has had gravely to reckon.

The less efficient, either left behind in the demanding adventure of pioneering or compelled to take up poor land,<sup>18</sup> have furnished a sadly retarded element in American life. Their general morality offered plenty of occasions for very elemental religious correction, their highly emotional temperaments furnished brush-wood for the revivalists' fire, their extreme suggestibility and lack of poise have supplied examples of religious hysteria hardly to be paralleled. And mixed through all the frontier populations at the beginning of the last century were foot-loose adventurers, criminals and degenerates who had themselves been sent over from Europe to the southern tide-water regions, or were the descendants of such ancestors.

The revivalism of the first decades of the nineteenth century dealt with such human material. It needed iron men, an

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<sup>18</sup> See *The Pulse of Progress*, Ellsworth Huntington, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1926, Chapter II, The Handicap of Poor Land.

iron theology and hell fire besides to save such souls as these. The movement once started was like the spread of a forest fire. There were no buildings to hold the crowds, no centers of population in which to build a "tabernacle." The woods are said to have been "God's first temples" but no forest temple since the priests of Attis mourned the death of their divinity has witnessed quite what the noble forests of Kentucky and Ohio witnessed. The people came from long distances in covered wagons with food and bedding. At nightfall the darkness was lit by fires whose lights fell upon men and women spent by emotions, shaken by mingled hope and fear, struck down motionless or else shrieking, praying God for salvation. The woods echoed with the groans of the stricken and the shouts of the saved, the shadows hid shameful deeds of passion.

Davenport<sup>14</sup> believes the movement to have saved the frontier from sinking to the level of savagery and to have contributed to the moral vigor of democracy and the higher life of the nation. One can only add that the price paid both by American religion and the societies thus saved was very high. Religion was strongly indoctrinated with the theologies needed to produce immediate and vivid results, baptized in emotionalism and kept alive by mass movements led by masterful personalities. Periods of reaction inevitably followed times of awakening, religious education and nurture were neglected, the churches mobilized their force upon too narrow a front, communities subject for generations to such experiences became unduly excitable. Very difficult aspects of American life can be traced to the general social and religious deposit of revivalism.

But the process went on. Finney had been, in the forties and fifties, the D. L. Moody of western New York. He modified the rigid Calvinism of Edwards and added the trained in-

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<sup>14</sup> *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals.*

tellect of a lawyer and a magisterial sternness to an almost hypnotic power over his audiences. And he put the fear of hell quite as much as the fear of God into the hearts of his hearers. He had an unusual power with men of force and standing, and his work had an enduring and constructive quality. He gave a quality to the church life of western New York which still persists.

The revival of 1857 is associated with no outstanding personality, but it probably permeated the religious life of the nation as no similar movement has done. It began with a Wall Street panic and the crashing close of a speculative era. It took shape in a Fulton Street prayer meeting, and presently the nation was on its knees. This revival worked through the churches and ministers; it was the reaction of the nation at large to the temporary débâcle of the great god prosperity and it furnished the tradition that a panic is always followed by a revival.<sup>15</sup> The revival of 1857 showed Moody his vocation though he would probably have found it under any circumstances. He was then in Chicago, "I go every night to meeting—Oh, how I do enjoy it! It seems as if God were here Himself. Pray that this work may go on until every knee is bowed, I wish there could be a revival in Northfield, that many might be brought into the fold of Christ."<sup>16</sup>

All this seems remote enough from the history of religion in America for the last forty years, but this whole linked sequence of revivalism has had an outstanding part, directly and indirectly, in making the Protestant evangelical mind. Much of what happened since Moody told in Northfield church the story of his near shipwreck has been determined by the strong influence of early evangelism.

<sup>15</sup> The panic of 1929-31 has not as yet supplied that tradition convincing support. At this writing (November, 1931) the Federal Council of Churches and affiliated bodies have asked for a nation-wide season of prayer for spiritual revival.

<sup>16</sup> *D. L. Moody*, W. R. Moody, The Macmillan Company, New York, page 41. By permission of The Macmillan Company.

Revivalism furnished a technique to which the emphasis upon religious education and nurture, so emergingly evident, began forty years ago to be opposed—and of which the North-field schools were themselves an anticipation. It fixed and heightened the theologies about which the rather thunderous controversies of the “fundamentalist” and “modernist” have been carried on. It conceived and offered religion as the way to personal salvation, it made conversion the mystic operation of the Holy Spirit, a divinely granted witness that the seeker had passed from death to life. It created a literature of its own and especially a gospel hymnology which set to music the confessions of the sin-burdened, the offer of salvation, the rapture of the saved, the bliss and glory of heaven and the peace of a life entirely committed to Christ and lived in communion with Him. It encouraged an ego-centric religious life and was haunted with “wishful thinking.”

It demanded a serious, chaste, church-attending life. It tabooed cards, the theatre and dancing, was laborious, thrifty, “giving of its substance to the Lord,” and fought alcohol in all its seductive forms. It encouraged the generous support of the Church, Christian philanthropies and the kind of education it approved. It was burdened with the estate of the unsaved and especially the heathen. The missionary enterprises of the American Protestant churches have grown out of revival awakenings, been motivated by the belief that Christianity alone can save and without it the vast Asiatic and African world, the Negro with his fetish, the Buddhist with his inherited lore of twenty-five centuries, and the Hindu with his wealth of speculation enriched by the almost timeless insight of a great race, were alike doomed. The missionary passion has risen to flood-tide power beneath the compulsion of convictions so shaped and tempered. If one adds the influence

of Wesleyanism in England to the force and outcome of evangelism in America, one has the religious dynamic of almost two hundred years among the English-speaking peoples. To leave that out would be to rewrite their history without any possible way of knowing how to rewrite it.<sup>17</sup>

The limitations of revivalism have been equally evident. It has been with few exceptions excessively individualistic. Its asceticisms have been generally sterile when they have not been futile, its emotionalism has heightened the mass instability of the American mind. Its assumptions of an infallible Bible and a supernatural conversion were particularly vulnerable at just the points where inherited religion began to feel the drive of critical scholarship and modern psychology. It invited reactions and disillusionment. In a sentence the long reaction against inherited Christianity which has been so distinctive for the last thirty years began in a reaction against revivalism. Earlier revivalism was too largely an appeal to fear, though it certainly included hope and forgiveness. And it brought to the front self-centered, self-seeking and arbitrary religious leaders. Religion offers no place in the spotlight more alluring than the vocation of a popular evangelist.

It was a gracious outcome of the whole movement that it is now most finely remembered in Moody. He was always free from any reproach of self-seeking. He did not entirely escape the critical attitude toward the churches and their ministers, which doubtless churches and ministers deserved and which has been part of the stage-machinery of other evangelists, but he tried always to conserve his work through the churches. He used love more than fear and heaven much more than hell. He was wisely human and open-minded. He

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<sup>17</sup> The great English historians have acknowledged the strategic influence of Wesleyanism in English history. The studies of American life and culture in the last decade have been strangely incomplete in their lack of recognition of the force of religion in American civilization. The work of the Beards is an exception.



brought Henry Drummond, the evolutionist, and George Adam Smith, the leader in the new study of the Bible, to Northfield; he incorporated and crowned his work in his schools conceived in a passion for youth. He died broken by years of tremendous toil in the sunrise of a winter morning with his "windows open to the resurrection." One may trace him through the indices of the biographies and autobiographies of religious leaders of the last fifty years as one traces John Henry Newman.

## VI

Revivalism did not end with Moody. His own associates carried on his work, or took lines of their own, though no one could fill his place. The association of an evangelist with a singer, trombone player or what you please became a standardized method. Torrey and Alexander preached and sang their way around the world. Chapman developed a genius for the organization of great cities in protracted campaigns, with specialists for men, women and children and new gospel songs. The methods of big business began to furnish a technique to the revivalist, and the worshipers cooperated joyfully; they understood that holy procedure. The Rev. William A. Sunday captured the headlines and furnished material of his own which the most accomplished headliner might covet. He added to the Church Militant the Church Acrobatic. He "soaked it into Satan" and whomever and whatever else he did not like or believe in—especially his critics. Religious controversy has, unhappily, often strained the resources of language for invective. Dr. Sunday tapped a new vein.

He yielded nothing to Edwards in a free and vivid use of hell—and yet with a difference. The awful solemnity of Edwards's fear-shot faith was gone. Sunday's fervid references to the inferno had something of the metallic sound of coin falling into the tin dishpans he used for collection plates,

and the procession down the sawdust trail had the bright nature of a social function with Sunday at the head of the receiving line. But he got results. His hatred of alcohol and the saloon, probably the most honest passion of his curiously compounded personality, had much to do with making America "dry." Also, through that strange alchemy of the soul by which very unlikely elements are transmuted into faith and devotion, considerable deposits of moral and, probably, religious results attended his ministry. No historian of either religion or the popular mind in America during the first decades of the twentieth century can overlook Billy Sunday and his tabernacles.

Revivalism by 1920 and 1930 had taken on a theatrical quality. The passion of Edwards, Whitefield, Cartwright and Finney and the right and essentially simple humanity of Moody had been timed to jazz and made gaudy with colored lights. The actors in the drama of the "Four Square Gospel" shared the headlines with the better-known citizens of Hollywood. The journalist by 1929 had become the historian of contemporary evangelism. It may well, in its more bizarre phases, be left to him. It is the creation of his time, and his hands like the dyer's are subdued to the colors he works in. No one else at present can do it justice.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> This last paragraph should be qualified. Association with many gracious and high-minded leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in June, 1932, taught the author that evangelistic methods, to a degree not common in the North, are a part of the method of their communion. But the "protracted meetings" are largely carried on by the ministers themselves and not open to the criticisms above.

## CHAPTER II

### NEW FORCES AND OLD FAITH

REVIVALISM has been the highly accredited recruiting agency of evangelical Protestantism and has gone far toward shaping the content of the popular religious mind: it has never been allowed the center of the stage alone. Also a sound distinction can be drawn between the revival method and the evangelical temper. The most emotional communions have never depended entirely upon it. The old historic churches have always subordinated it to Christian nurture. The organic life of Roman Catholicism took, as always, its own massive line substantially unaffected by it, though the very considerable use of the "mission" in American Catholicism has likely been an indirect acknowledgment of the need for something to complement the corporate and sacramental in religion. The Episcopal communion is not easily drawn into gusty popular movements and has maintained with considerable aloofness its liturgical and sacramental order, supported by religious nurture.

The liberal rationalistic religious mind has been generally more alienated than edified by the evangelist. American Unitarianism was, historically, a reaction against the theology which supported the Great Awakening, and Universalism was a protest against the excessive emphasis upon everlasting punishment of the early nineteenth century evangelism. Even the judicious orthodox have always mourned the emotional excesses and the inevitable reactions of the revival. No history of American revivalism would be complete without a series of footnotes, at least, to record the protests and apprehensions (often justified) with which men whose concern for the endur-

ing interests of religion could not be questioned, regarded the whole method.<sup>1</sup>

Even the evangelical churches carried on with an inclusive solidity which made revivalism marginal—at the worst a few weeks of interruption now and then of their placid programs and at the best an exciting episode with the desirable possibility of an “ingathering.” The churches of the 1890’s and even the first decade of the twentieth century shared the general untroubled estate of American life. Whatever has since darkened the world’s horizon was then in evidence, only as suffused mists add some soft sadness of light to a brilliant day before an autumnal storm.

Victorious imperialism was only a proud procession of races and princes through the streets of London to celebrate the jubilee of a Queen. Its embattled issues could not yet be seen behind its pageantry. Evolution was only a progress through the æons toward “one far-off divine event” staged for the glory of God and the glorification of man. It could be trusted to bring all desirable things in its train, for the “heir of all the ages in the foremost ranks of time.” The existing economic system was, it was universally believed, a signal demonstration of the beneficence of the evolutionary process and the wisdom of God; democracy was saluted as the “one far-off divine event.”

## I

These were halcyon days for the churches. The militant issues between modernist and fundamentalist had not begun to be drawn. The more weatherwise saw signs of a storm in the offing and an occasional heresy trial, in which a theological professor who had been carrying “higher criticism” too high-

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<sup>1</sup> Sunday, for example, directed his bitterest invective toward just such doubters.

handedly was the central figure, lent a dramatic interest to ecclesiastical assemblies, but in general churches, on the very threshold of the most momentous challenge religion has ever had to face, were apparently unconscious of what was actually so close to them. They should not be too much criticized for that; they were at least as foreseeing as the statesmen of Europe and America.

Theological rigidities had been considerably softened. Horace Bushnell <sup>2</sup> (1802-1876) had made tentative approaches toward the reconciliation of religion and science in his *Nature and the Supernatural*. It was an entirely theological approach colored on one side by his reactions against the New England theology and limited on the other by the rather nebulous estate of his science, but it was a rationalistic <sup>3</sup> approach. His emphasis upon Christian nurture corrected the crisis methods of revivalism. His leavening and enlightening intellect greatly influenced the liberal preaching of a generation later. The churches of 1890 were the accepted aspects of all "godly, righteous and sober" life—also of all respectable and prosperous life.

The brighter streets of our cities were then, of a Sunday morning, full of citizens in silk hats and frock coats leading their families to the sanctuary. The white slender-steepled churches of New England were full of steadfast folk, and the "horse sheds" behind the churches full of the vehicles which had brought them there. In kinder climates the horses suffered winter winds or fought summer flies tied to the long hitching racks. The rattle of their harness came through the church windows, if they were open, and accentuated the restlessness of boys and girls with their minds on Sunday dinners. Church

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<sup>2</sup> See *Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian*, Munger. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1899.

<sup>3</sup> Not used technically but just to indicate that Bushnell who had a mind of the first class used it for a free and reasonable examination of inherited theology.

buildings followed conventional lines and in the older American cities were sober and dignified. New England had many lovely old churches of the Georgian type in spired brick and wood, porticoed without and columned within. The preacher was shut away from the congregation and the world by a massive mahogany pulpit; the organ and the choir were commonly in the rear gallery. The communion table was at the foot of the pulpit. The pulpit furniture might be mahogany with plush or horse-hair though there had been some replacement of very noble chairs and "settees" with less distinguished creations.

Such churches were likely to face a gracious space which had anciently been the village green or else to have behind them an old burying ground in which the dead somewhat distressed the living by their placid occupancy of land beginning to have considerable commercial value. The pews in such churches if they had been let alone were severe in line, painted white and edged with mahogany; the windows were as yet clear glass; they were still "meeting houses." Once the preacher was in his pulpit, he had no means of escape in any case of need save down the aisle and out of the front door.

The "mid-week meeting," the women's missionary and sewing societies were commonly carried on in detached buildings called "chapels" of a painful plainness and a depressing atmosphere. Such kitchens as they had were dark. If the lecture room were not used as a dining room the regions set aside for such use were conspicuous for their lack of ventilation. The sanitary conveniences were the last word in unlighted remoteness. The Greeks would, I think, have contemplated the Christian adaptation of their architecture with mixed feelings. More ambitious churches of a later period were Gothic of a solid sort with interior furnishings of walnut, which through its smooth grain and sad unworldly color seemed particularly fitted for ecclesiastical uses. In these

churches the organ and choir were usually brought down from the gallery though there was no general agreement as to their proper position in evangelical Gothic. The chapel had by 1890 become a part of the church building and was becoming more elaborate in arrangement. The Church was enlarging her functions.

The Georgian and the Gothic were supplemented by another type of church architecture hard to classify save as it served the purpose of the non-liturgical communions. Such buildings were plain, rectangular, mostly brick. They made up in acoustical excellence what they lacked in reverent detail. Nineteenth century Gothic was likely to be wanting in this feature, often compelling the congregation to choose its minister as much for his ability to be heard at all as for what he said. Henry Ward Beecher's famous Plymouth Church was only an auditorium but the whispered modulations of his organ-toned voice could be heard across it, and its floor space was arranged to seat the maximum number of hearers.

## II

Classic, Gothic or just plain church, the pulpit dominated the church, and the preacher dominated the pulpit. He might be helped or hindered by the choir (generally a quartet, often temperamental). An outstanding church in a middle-western city was long known throughout the region as the church of its tenor singer. The forms of worship were simple and designed to lead to the sermon. The minister himself was likely to have been chosen for his power or appeal as a preacher, and little was expected of him outside the pulpit save a pretty constant round of pastoral calls. The young "pastor's assistant" was just beginning to show above the horizon—a luminary of small candle power, but expected to brighten. Ten or twelve thousand dollars a year was a metropolitan budget of stellar distinction. It paid the parson, the choir, the janitor and what

else a church might need for its local enterprise. Five thousand dollars was a soul-satisfying salary. Ministers who got more were discussed with reverence by their clerical brethren; their names shone with a golden light in the lists of the prophets.

The churches, of every communion, in the wealthy eastern cities and the outstanding cities of the interior were highly considered and commanded preachers of national or international reputation, though there was no such free interchange of pulpits between England and America as since has been carried on. Church attendance was even then, it was said, falling off though statistical evidence was lacking. A little later Gills's studies in Vermont and Ohio showed a falling off of rural church attendance as compared with a generation earlier.<sup>4</sup> The best preaching of the period reflected its general serenity. Even among the more conservative the old theology was mellowed while the more adventurous of the liberals were shaping what they believed to be a new theology. The sermons to which the favored listened Sunday after Sunday were of a fine literary quality and written out of the preacher's joy in writing them—which is perhaps the perennial secret of all good preaching.

They were exercises in the ingenious treatment of texts, they dealt with the subjective interests of life, they were highly idealistic and quoted generously from Browning and Tennyson. They were rather distinctively ends in themselves, weekly *jours de force* of always thoughtful and often brilliant men who shared with their congregations their meditations upon religion and life. They took care to give their work finished form; some of them were effective rhetoricians. Their sermons were thus an artistic, intellectual or emotional event in the weekly life of their congregations, being not too much (with

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<sup>4</sup> A careful study of conditions in Franklin County, Massachusetts, in 1896 or 1897 convinced the investigator—a very judicious man—that there had been no marked percentage changes in thirty years.



exceptions presently to be noted) caught in the current of secular or social interests nor uncomfortably insistent upon the immediate reformation of the world order. It was a very comfortable order and seemed to demand only minor modifications.

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) was then unexpectedly near the end of his very noble career and was the most distinguished living representative of this phase of American preaching. He had every gift—a massive physique, the finest of faces, a power of torrential utterance, insight and imagination, unfailing resource, a glowing style, a happy feeling for life, a saving humor, a rich humanity, a catholic spirit and a kindling persuasion of the “everlasting reality of religion.” He was a leader in that exaltation of Jesus which became so marked in the next three decades. His life was an unshadowed sequence of personal popularity and clerical felicity (and he deserved it all). He had come to Boston in 1869 at the age of thirty-four after a brilliant pastorate in Philadelphia—a Boston which was to be till the end of the century the self-confessed center of American culture.

He became thereafter an institution—like the State House or the Common or Faneuil Hall or the mural paintings in the Public Library. Richardson designed and an opulent parish built him a great Romanesque church—the first outstanding departure in American church architecture and the pioneer of proud structures, Byzantine in Detroit, Spanish Renaissance in Providence, neo-Gothic everywhere. He filled Trinity twice a day for years. Every devout visitor to Boston heard him as a matter of course, just as devout visitors to New York were later to hear Fosdick as a matter of course, and he did it all, without any help from the radio or much from the secular press, through the allure of his personality and the human appeal of his preaching. He made his own pulpit a throne, every door

was open to him from a parish church to Westminster Abbey and he gave himself without measure.

About that time the colleges and universities began to substitute boards of college preachers for the less varied spiritual sustenance which generations of students had received from their presidents and faculty members. Brooks was everywhere in demand for such services, and especially identified with Harvard—his own college—when he died with almost tragic suddenness in 1893, having been made Bishop of Massachusetts two years before. His body was borne down the aisle of Trinity by Harvard students. When the tolling college bell announced that the cortège was entering the college grounds, students in crowded lines and with bowed heads stood in silence while the carriages passed through the “yard.” It was the *ave atque vale* of youth to a spirit over which time had no empire.

The titles of Brooks’s published volumes of sermons indicate the general current of his mind: *The Candle of the Lord, Visions and Tasks, The Light of the World, Seeking Life, The Battle of Life, New Starts in Life*. They were essentially sermons of hope and courage, of faith in God and man and very greatly of the spiritual sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Life and light and truth were his key-words. Ambassador Bryce noted his freedom from studied art, his swift and quiet movement, the evidences of his “singularly pure and lofty spirit, his warmth and tenderness, his keen observations and fine reflection.” He gave a new direction to American preaching; echoes and overtones of his message were heard in preaching in general till the World War.

George A. Gordon (1853-1929) preached in the “Old South” across Copley Square from Trinity during the great period of Brooks’s power. The two were the closest of friends. Gordon during his belated college days “went to Trinity

Church with unbroken regularity for two years," and Brooks was one of the three officiating clergymen at Gordon's marriage, and remembered that service as, for him, the most lovely ministration of a life rich in ministration. In Gordon's autobiography, his reminiscences and characterization of Brooks are delightful and penetrating.<sup>5</sup> Brooks's career, he thought, had been "one long celestial joy ride" while his, he knew, had been "through thick woods and over rough hills with not even a footpath for a guide." (The road out of Calvinism has always been through rough country.) Brooks was, he said, the greatest of American inspirational preachers, he rushed his ideas at once into the service of life.

Gordon shared with Brooks wide recognition and academic favor—otherwise no two men could be more different. Gordon was the son of a Scotch grieve and born in Aberdeenshire. He had lived in his boyhood the laborious and frugal life, strongly indoctrinated with Calvinism and saturated with religion, of his people. He had known what it was to put on frozen shoes of weekday mornings to work in the turnip fields and listen on Sundays to sermons an hour and a half long with twenty-four subdivisions. Such a regime makes or breaks a boy but Gordon brought away from it gracious and humorous recollections, a quenchless feeling for the misty beauty of his homeland, pride of race and a mind of the first order.

He came to America in the steerage and lost fourteen pounds on the way over through a distaste for food unfit for human beings or "even pigs." He worked as a day laborer; his first-hand knowledge of the estate of the poor and toilful enriched his sympathies with humanity. The travail of his life and his mind seamed his face which carried to the end a Scotch ruggedness. He educated himself in theology and the

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<sup>5</sup> *My Education and Religion—An Autobiography*, George A. Gordon, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1925. A fascinating book, itself an illuminating commentary on forty years of American religious life.

humanities at an age at which most men have quite literally finished their education. He lived with Plato, the philosophers, the poets and the great litterateurs. Theologically his thought was a life-long reaction against his inherited Calvinism. He shared this wearing enterprise with his countryman, Thomas Carlyle, but carried it through with less audible protest (though, as has been said, he showed the scars of it) and to a more triumphant conclusion.

He never doubted the sovereignty of God but believed that the Eternal used His power to save and not to damn. Gordon's preaching was far more speculative and philosophical than Brooks's. He was native in mind and spirit to regions akin to his own Scotch hills—regions of high horizons, mist-clothed yet always with a contestant light shining through to touch the summits of his faith and vision with stormy splendor. He loved ample themes: The Ultimate Conceptions of Faith, Revelation and the Ideal, The Witness to Immortality, Personality, Humanity, God, The Moral Universe. I should think his last volume of sermons, *Revelation and the Ideal*, in its disclosure of the resources of his mind, the noble fulness of it, the exaltation of its themes, its distinction of style, suffused imagination, insight and understanding of life, all subdued to Christian faith and idealism, the greatest volume of sermons by any preacher of the nineteenth century—and yet it is out of print and hard to find in most preachers' libraries.

Gordon wrote more widely than Brooks but the response to his nobly significant work came from limited groups. Something of that was due to his unusual detachment from the machinery of the corporate life of his denomination and the larger social movements of his time. He was rarely among those present unless he played a stellar part. He was a distinctively liberalizing force in theological thought. The controversy which attended his installation over the Old South Church in Boston anticipated in holy ardor the later engage-

ments of modernist and fundamentalist and, though fought out upon a local terrain, went far in the issue of it toward saving his own communion further militant experiences.

## III

I have chosen these two men for especial notice not because Boston was the homiletic hub of these United States or because the end of the century had no other preachers of distinction, for there were outstanding men in all the communions, but because they illustrate the centrality of preaching in the church life of the period and the half-detached-from-the-gritty-substance-of-the-world character of that preaching. Whatever the congregation, it went to church mostly to hear the sermon, and the sermon—not necessarily the preacher—had the rather self-conscious way of saying: “Well, here I am and now ‘church’ is really begun.” One must not blame the sermon too much either for its prominence, its unworldliness or even its complacency. It was cognate with a time which was at least disingenuous in its worldliness and complacently persuaded that it was the best of all possible worlds.

Perhaps it was; certainly against the world travail of a generation later the period, though the young satirize it and those who were then young remember it wistfully, seems eminently desirable. The men who voiced its faiths and its hopes were wise and clear-visioned. Their very detachment lent a timeless quality to their interpretation of religion and life. It may well be that the war which shipwrecked their hopes did not prove them foolish dreamers. It may have proved only the tragic folly of those who did their best to break down a great culture and a slowly ripening and dearly bought civilization—and called themselves wise.

There was as yet little recognition of the forces which were beginning to change the status of the churches and of inherited religion. The first concern of the churches was to

maintain their own pleasant ways through good preaching, sufficient income and an assuring numerical growth. Protestantism was still strongly in the ascendant; there was a flurry in Massachusetts over the "little red schoolhouse" and an anti-Catholic movement in the interior states (The American Protective Association) but the Protestant tradition was dominant. The next concern of the churches was for the growth and prosperity of their respective denominations whose general forms of organization had been unchanged since the schisms of the Civil War.

Northern churches all maintained schools and churches in the South for the freed-men, and there were still a frontier, whose romance captivated the imagination of the older parts of the country, and apparently need and room enough for all the churches which superintendents, secretaries and bishops could plant. "Home missionary" enterprises were generously supported. Colleges established under sectarian sanction were just beginning to de-sectarianize themselves; but there were enough left to furnish any pulpit at any time with a college president who needed money. Such enterprises created organizations and vested interests and furnished the churches a sufficient occupation.

The great romance of the churches was foreign missions. For this they had created really vast organizations and given in the aggregate great sums of money. The more evangelical sought to save the souls of the heathen. Those who had begun to wonder a little whether the immemorial cultures of the East were actually heathen and to doubt a little if they would be damned without a chance, wished to carry the blessings of Western civilization to a non-Christian world which had not as yet begun to suspect that accepting Western civilization was much like the well-known ride of the Lady of Niger. At any rate the foreign missionary enterprises of the churches were the least self-centered of their activities though they were,

among other things, perpetuating the sectarian divisions of Western Christianity in regions where they had no meaning.

## IV

The social consciousness of the churches was as yet nebulous. Its later development belongs to other chapters. There was at the end of the last century no general examination in Christian churches of the social and economic order. It was working quite happily for those who enjoyed its benefits, and a very large percentage of such beneficiaries were in the Protestant churches. A belief in an essential relation between godliness and prosperity was a widely accepted article in what might be called "the unrecited Creeds of the Faith." J. Pierpont Morgan was the best known lay churchman in America; the benefactions of John D. Rockefeller were beginning to flow in a golden stream.

The churches were concerned for "clean politics"—though they reflected strongly the sectional political affiliations existing since the Civil War. Northern Protestants were predominantly Republican. The South was solidly Protestant and Democratic. The churches, therefore, beyond the interest of their communicants in the tariff asked for little social content in their party platforms. They reflected severally the dominant economic interests of the East or the West, the North or the South, and substantially the economic interests of the favored classes. A speaker at some conference or other could, however, always get a round of applause by maintaining that it might be a purer act of religion to go to the caucus than the prayer meeting, though it is doubtful if all the absentees from prayer meeting could thus have been accounted for.

Washington Gladden believed that the word socialism had been disinfected but the fear of infection still held acutely among church people. The habits of the generality were still simple, Sabbath-keeping and devout. Peacock Alley in the

old Waldorf-Astoria had just begun to furnish the prosperous a widely advertised and richly gilded parade. The majority of Americans still kept to less flamboyant paths. The prayer meeting was believed to be "the thermometer of the Church" though by such tests there were signs of falling temperature. Most older members could "lead in prayer" to the edification of the assembled fellowship and testify, out of some deep experience, of the travail of their souls. I would not seem to touch such things too lightly; I have known too many whose religious faith was the sincere and unfailing support of very gracious lives, not only believing in the Communion of the Saints but so living it that their faces were lit from within and their friendship a benediction.

Someone, I do not know who, said of pre-war England that it was as though a slowly deepening twilight were darkening a once brilliant drawing room. There are twilights one sees as they fall, there is another and darker chill marking the ends of great epochs, which one does not recognize at all as the gray shadows steal on. The light is still there; only the most sensitive are aware of the menacing shadows. I suppose light is now reaching the earth from star-suns whose light is already in eclipse at the source. Who can tell that the light is failing at its source till the darkness falls?

Something like this, we now see, had by the end of the century already begun to affect the American churches. My learned colleague, Dr. Robert Nichols, believes the eighteenthies to have actually marked the turning point for inherited Christianity. A decade or two later arresting signs of a re-examination of the fundamentals of faith were in evidence.

V

The forces, new ruling ideas, changing conceptions of the fundamentals of inherited Christian faith—no one designation is quite right—which have given, in one way and another,



direction to American religious history for the last forty years were all in evidence by the end of the nineteenth century. Some of them were pretty clearly seen, and their bearing upon religion was beginning to give concern to the far-sighted. Others had, as yet, taken only so vague a form as to occasion no disquiet; they were only clouds the size of a man's hand. Others were actually welcomed. They were, it was thought, a proof that specialists in unfrequented regions who had so far left religion to the theologians were beginning to take a belated interest in it. Which was quite true though their interest was to prove rather iconoclastic.

Chronologically science has the right of way in this enumeration but I shall begin with psychology because Starbuck published his *Psychology of Religion* in 1899, the year D. L. Moody died. He began with an epoch-making sentence: "Science has conquered one field after another, until now it is entering the most complex, the most inaccessible and of all the most sacred domain—that of religion."<sup>6</sup> This invasion, he added, would be welcomed with both delight and regret. Thereafter, he explained why such an invasion was a kind of "manifest destiny" (an explanation of other invasions as well) and the technique of his study. He was the father, apparently, of the questionnaire, with its invitation to turn one's soul inside out in the cause of science, which the twentieth century was to take over whole-heartedly. He examined, on the basis of the replies secured, the motives and forces leading to conversion: "Experience immediately before conversion," "that in which conversion consists," "the conscious and sub-conscious elements in conversion" and "the character of the new life."

He traced it through the struggle of old patterns with new impulses and longings to a re-centering of dominant elements in personality upon a new level. He reduced the travail

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<sup>6</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*, E. D. Starbuck, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899, page 1.

of the spirit, the black night of the mystic's soul, the rapture of the saved and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to an affair of embattled egos and contending complexes conducted mainly on the terrain of the sub-conscious. He furnished blackboard diagrams for what had been the ways of God with the souls of men. He correlated all this with the strains of adolescence, established the relation between religion and sex and supplied an actuarial table of the age-expectancy of conversion for boys and girls and noted "that one of the forces working in revivals is that of suggestion and hypnotism."<sup>7</sup>

Enormously significant issues lay behind such a study. A sentence like the last quoted opened startling vistas. Auto-suggestion had not as yet risen clearly above these horizons; it was waiting with fateful implications. Starbuck's contrasts between the ends reached by conversion and by the less violent processes of growth went far toward supplying that emphasis upon religious nurture which has become the motif of religious education. He supplied a psychological basis for Bushnell's insight and insistence upon Christian nurture. Incidentally he made it impossible for his readers ever to see the "mourner's bench" as their fathers had seen it. He recognized the place of conversion in religious life and dealt with it reverently; but when you can diagram the travail of the soul the awesome mystery of it is gone.

Three years later (1902) William James published his Gifford Lectures.<sup>8</sup> They achieved immediately a widespread recognition and within a dozen years had gone through twenty-six printings. James was the most brilliant of American psychologists, a universally acknowledged authority. He wrote—to quote a cliché—"psychology like a novelist." He had a most vivid interest in every aspect of human nature—his

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, page 171.

<sup>8</sup> *The Varieties of Religious Experience, A Study in Human Nature*—William James, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1902.

sub-title is more significant than his title—a very great interest in religion as the most fascinating phenomenon of human nature and a gift which the specialist does not always possess and therefore distrusts of making erudition interesting.

“Epoch-making” is also a cliché and often said in haste but *The Varieties of Religious Experience* was epoch-making. His chapter headings were of sovereign significance: Religion and Neurology, The Reality of the Unseen, The Religion of Healthy-mindedness, The Divided Self and the Process of Its Unification, Conversion, The Value of Saintliness, Mysticism. Within such ample frontiers he dealt with almost every variety of human experience, documenting his absorbing recital with illustrations drawn from the most varied sources and bringing it all to life through the electric play of his own mind. All this was welcomed by the devout as a sign that a great psychologist thought religion worth his laborious attention. The far-sighted could hardly then have seen the implications of all his conclusions. Jonathan Edwards had believed the goodnesses and joys of conversion to have been the effects of the spirit of God and “altogether supernatural.” James furnished authority for those who would maintain them entirely human-natural—an affair entirely within the frontiers of personality and demanding no divine intervention. Religion had now to reckon with psychology.

## VI

It was already conscious that it had to reckon with science. It was still gravely teaching in its Sunday schools the essential cosmogony of Babylonia interpreted and moralized through the ancient Hebrew sacred books, while science was assembling through its patient investigation a massive body of facts and, with evolution for a key-word, slowly fashioning a new geology, biology and astronomy. These challenged at every point the old creation stories of the Bible and carried with

them implications with which inherited religion would have to reckon. Whether the mass religious mind of America was then at all penetrated by what was going on is a question hard to answer after thirty years—very likely not. Religion has great insulating power. I do know that evolution was taught rather cautiously, even in a secular state university, a little earlier.

For the most part the leaders of religious thought had got no further than ingenious reconciliations of Genesis and geology. (Mr. Gladstone had exercised his restless mind in just these regions.) But the more understanding felt that reconciliations were likely to prove inadequate and foresaw the extent to which inherited theologies would have to be recast to fit the new heavens and the new earth and the new time and space-scheme into which the human enterprise would have to be fitted. These early wrestlings of religion with a revolutionary range of facts was carried on mainly with geology and human evolution. The bearing of physics upon the ultimate structure of matter was not yet in sight. No one had as yet undertaken to prove free will from the incalculable action of electrons, and I do not know that "bio-chemistry" was in the dictionaries or the ductless glands discovered. For all that inherited Christianity was already facing forces which were to create a kind of mind with which it had never before had to deal.

A third disturbing fact was higher criticism. (The name has now begun to be a little strange.) Psychology and science were—or seemed to be—side issues. The authority of the Bible was central. Few great religions have been more dependent upon their sacred books than Christianity. All its recognized backgrounds were in the Old Testament, its validity was tied up with the New Testament. It had been invested with an infallible authority, every verse carried—if one could understand it—an equal accent of the Holy Ghost. The rev-

erences and associations of the years hallowed its pages. It was religion, history and science. Preaching was the elucidation of its texts, prayer claimed its promises, and faith was sustained by its revelation. It had been, however, since the middle of the nineteenth century under examination, mostly by German scholars, and its parts were beginning to be traced to their sources and appraised by the historical conditions under which they had been written. By the end of the century the more advanced American theological seminaries began to add to their faculties young men "who had studied in Germany" and brought back the contagion of such ideas.

The engagements they precipitated began in the less strategic sectors—the Book of Jonah, for example, which the more advanced explained as a foreign missionary tract of a vivid and dramatic sort. George Adam Smith's studies of the prophets began to be read by thoughtful young ministers. Prophecy had always been one of the structural supports of Christian faith. Isaiah's foretelling of Cyrus two hundred years before he appeared was a proof text of the prophet's inspired infallibility. Smith assigned parts of the book to a much later author who knew about Cyrus because he was already marching upon Babylon. The theory of the two Isaiahs roused an amazing spiritual belligerency. There were two camps, charges and counter-charges, hot exchanges.

Shrewd D. L. Moody made his own contribution. "What's the use," he said, "of telling the people there are two Isaiahs when most people don't know there is one?" Then he invited Smith to Northfield where he (Smith) preached an irenic sermon from the Book of Proverbs—which was neutral territory. The incident did everybody concerned great credit. All this seems rather remote but it is fundamental to any understanding of religion in our times. For the foundations then being challenged supported the very structure of Protestantism (and indirectly Catholicism). If they should begin to give way,

the churches would be compelled to seek other foundations and authorities and find the quest sadly perplexing.

## VII

Since the Civil War industrialism had furnished the music for the "epic of America." It was a grandiose music, beaten hoarsely out in a thousand factories, played lustily in cities which flaunted their smoke as banners against the sky, by a generation of "rugged individualists" who had apparently found ways of not only avoiding any reckoning with the piper but of actually getting the piper to pay them. They had the resources of a continent to exploit and applied science as the slave of their lamp. There were Gargantuan claimants for the economic throne in republican America—cotton and corn, copper and oil, wheat and silver, iron and coal, railroads and, most pathetic of all, the noble fir and redwood forests of the Pacific Coast which, like the ancient priest-kings, paid for their sovereignty with their lives.

These auriferous dominions were administered by oil kings, copper kings, men of staggering possession and power who had, like Napoleon, crowned themselves. Meanwhile the strain between the industrial and agrarian populations—an always unresolved factor in the American drama—had become acute through a fall in the prices of agricultural products unchecked since the deflation which followed the Civil War. An unrestricted immigration, of great value to the industrialists, had massed unassimilated populations in the industrial cities. The cities were slowly draining the rural regions of their most capable youth, balances of rural and urban population were shifted. The formation of a "labor class" was practically accomplished and labor had become class conscious.

It had begun to organize and its organization was bitterly fought by interests which were themselves masterfully organ-

ized and consolidated by community of interest and interlocking directorates. "Wall Street" was the center from which it all radiated, upon which the profit of it all converged. The interests controlled and directed legislation indirectly through the influential organs of public opinion, directly by a preponderant representation in state legislatures and the national Congress. They were buttressed by a legal system whose central concern was property rights and by courts which could be depended upon to maintain them. National political campaigns were generally fought out on economic issues. The "full dinner pail" furnished the dominant party its slogan. While the laborer filled his dinner pail as he could and brought it home at night empty, the controlling groups filled their safety deposit boxes and vaults and kept them full.

The Protestant churches were involved in all this and deeply. With here and there an unregenerate exception the financial and industrial magnates had the best pews on the "center-aisles" of our best churches. Ministers in their more worldly moments of confidential intercourse sometimes reckoned the millions up and down that carpeted road to the altar. I have heard a Y. M. C. A. secretary recite carressingly the long list of great industrialists who were good churchmen and good givers. There was a belief in the relation between prosperity and godliness which, if it did not furnish one of the principal articles of faith, was certainly among the addenda. Now (about 1900) all this began to be thrice questioned: economically, morally and socially.

There were signs of structural faults. The country had always accepted without much examination its periodic depressions. The economist thought them an inevitable phase of the business cycle; the politician, if he were in opposition, blamed them on the party in power and promised remedial legislation—mostly manipulation of the tariff or currency. If he were in power, he spoke hopefully or prophesied a direr disaster

if he were deposed. The religious moralist saw the hand of God laid in judgment upon the worshipers of mammon and anticipated a religious revival. Rising tides of prosperity had always, to use an inept figure, hid the faults again. The depression of 1892, while short in duration, had been accompanied by social phenomena then new to America, a portentous stir of the debtor class in the West and signs of socialist tendencies to which the progress of socialism in Europe gave added significance.

Studies of the distribution of wealth in America showed a growing centralization of wealth in a diminishing percentage of the population. The bearing of all this upon democracy began for the first time to be evident. Social conscience began to take form and to concern itself with the status of the laboring classes and the ethics of an economic system which produced such wide variations in position, possession and power. The churches found all this standing at their own threshold for they represented the prosperous middle class. In the industrial cities the laboring populations were alien to Protestantism in race and Church tradition. A gulf had begun to open between the Church and the underprivileged. This, too, was profoundly to influence the whole program of the American churches for the next generation.

## VIII

Manners and morals were naturally changed by a general prosperity, the quick acquisition of wealth by men of raw native force, the rapid growth of cities and the influx of populations quite alien to the Puritan tradition. A very ancient Babylonian tablet laments the decay of morals and a loss of respect for Marduk, and very likely the complaint was just. Imperial cities and the simple life do not go well together. History has never been afraid of repeating itself (which gives it its most instructive value). Rudyard Kipling who was just



then at the top of his form had been reminding Imperial England of Nineveh and Tyre. American life as long as it was preponderantly rural had been simple, laborious (it had to be), "Sabbath-keeping" (men, women and horses welcomed Sunday), church-attending (the church was the center of their community life), religious (religion began, in part, as an affair with seasons, fields and the hearth-stone) and puritanical. Thrift was a necessary virtue, extravagance was self-limited.

All this began to be greatly changed by the end of the century. The plutocrat had come into his own. The older American aristocracies (families who had been rich long enough to get used to it or whose ancestors came over in the May-flower) were crowded off stage by men and women who made spending a mad caprice. Dogs wore diamond-studded collars, cigarettes were wrapped in one hundred dollar bills, chorus girls took the place of blackbirds in a pie and furnished a very pretty dish indeed, women who once might have done their own laundry wore ropes of pearls, Peacock Alley furnished newspaper headlines. Any gentleman from the interior was proud to know "Oscar" the chef, and the Bradley-Martins gave a ball which brought a replica of Versailles to a New York hotel while hunger stalked the streets outside and misery huddled in alleys.<sup>9</sup>

The middle class benefited by the general economic development and more wisely. They sent their children to college where they met ascendant science, attended compulsory chapel, heard the best preaching America offered on Sundays and generally outdid their parents in attendance upon the means of grace. Protests were beginning to be made against such enforced piety and Harvard had already made such

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<sup>9</sup> There is now any amount of clever literature dealing with this period. A standard authority is *The Rise of American Civilization*, Charles and Mary Beard, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927. These details are condensed from Chapter XXV. But the writer remembers the newspapers and magazine comments of the period.

services optional. Even the soundness of middle class life was touched and changed. The motor car had begun tentatively to enlarge the radius of possible variation from church doors. American life began to soften. There was also a serious concern for culture (Browning Clubs flourished) and a finer standard of æsthetic judgment. This also affected the churches, their technique, their interpretation of moral standards and, very greatly, the content of preaching.

What follows in this book is an attempt to discover and describe the ways in which the churches of the last generation met the situations thus created. As one sees the contours of it all—and they are still too near to see them all in proportion or trace their final merging in vaster frontiers—one sees that the Protestant cultus (with which alone we are concerned) was then entering an epoch of fundamental readjustment. It had locked up upon the scheme of salvation of which revivalism was the emotional expression.

Its supreme concern had been to seek and save the lost, comfort the troubled, answer from the Bible the questions which the mystery of life in Carlyle's "star-domed universe" raised, keep alive a faith in a God who ordered the lives of the devout with justice, love and wisdom, and assure the dying Christian of a blessed immortality.

Its theologies, its liturgies, its hymns, its preaching and its prayer were focused upon these ends. They had, indeed, been the end of all religion since man had made his first gesture toward the unknown. Christianity believed itself elect and final, the long-expected divine revelation to a dying world. All material things were transient aspects of man's short pilgrimage between two eternities. The twentieth century challenged every article of the Church's inherited program—save the two eternities which are now being hyphenated with space—and the brevity of the pilgrimage. What could the churches do?

### CHAPTER III

## THE CHURCH DISCOVERS THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

THE nineteenth Christian century bequeathed to twentieth century Christianity four distinct tasks: the adaptation of its inherited faith to the conclusions of science, critical history and the new psychology; the examination and re-interpretation of its sacred books; the discovery of a changed appeal; the Christian recasting of society. Any one of these was challenging enough to demand the whole force and intelligence of Christianity and the long coöperation of time. The four of them—with all their implications—have proved a task beyond the power of a single generation to accomplish. The confusions of the immediate past have issued out of the action and reaction of all the different kinds of minds and ways of human nature in the churches as they have carried on.

They deserve, on the whole, more credit than their age has granted them. They have been valiant and persistent. The task grew no easier as they went on and the far-reaching consequences of what they had to reckon with became apparent. But they fought a good fight and strove to keep the faith. The historian who undertakes to make some order out of it—himself entangled in the process—is sure to find it difficult to know where to begin, just as the churches did. They met the challenge of this new time, I should say, first and most definitively in their endeavor to create a Christian society in a Christian world. They wrote the "social gospel" upon "the banner of the Cross."

Two men, one of whom always looked upon his world with grave eyes touched toward the end with sadness, and the other who, though very deaf, heard the cry of the disinherited for justice very clearly, did more between them to direct the mind of the churches toward the social problem than any of

their contemporaries. It is ungrateful to name them alone. Chicago Theological Seminary founded a chair in social economics to which Graham Taylor brought wisdom, zeal and vision. Herron of Grinnell was for a while a vivid figure in the same region. He had a tongue of flame to speak with and, though he passed into eclipse, his passion for social righteousness stabbed the churches alive. Bishop Charles Williams of Michigan devoted his unusual force, insight and courage to social Christianity. He was like a tower four square, no criticism or opposition could shake or silence him. Any roster of the soldiers of the common good is incomplete without the shining name of Jane Addams. And now the progressive ministry of every communion is strongly socially minded.

Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch do, however, deserve a place apart. They cannot be credited with the discovery that Christianity is a social religion bearing upon every phase of life—that would seem to be as old as the Gospels. The Catholic Church had been the great almoner and hospitaler of the Middle Ages; the half-mystic German groups, Friends of God and Brothers of the Common Life, had been rich in humanitarian impulse and deeply sensitive to the sad estate of the dispossessed. It is the fashion just now to blame the Reformation for the creation of capitalism and an acquisitive society. Capitalism is, however, not confined to Protestant societies, and acquisitiveness is considerably older than the Reformation. The Reformation, through the changed status it brought the individual, its concern for education and its contribution to democracy and the free-state, supplied social progress indispensable tools. The Christian Church cannot be justly charged with an entire want of concern for social injustice in any period, though the intensity and intelligence of its concern have greatly varied.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For massive studies of the ethical ideas of Christianity with some reference to social ideals, see *Christian Theology and Social Progress*, E. W. Russell, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1907, and *History of Ethics Within*

John Ruskin in the nineteenth century had been led, by the way of English rivers polluted by industrial waste and English countrysides scarred by industrial progress, to inquire into the soundness of Manchester political economy. He doubted the validity of the orthodox definitions of wealth. "That which seems to be wealth," he said, "may in verity be only the gilded index of far-reaching ruin; a wrecker's handful of coin gleaned from the beach to which he has beguiled an argosy." Treasures, he thought, might be as heavy with human tears as ill-starred harvests with untimely rain. "In fact it may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple—not in rock but in flesh, perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright eyed and happy-hearted human creatures."<sup>2</sup> He anticipated in his answer—wealth is human well-being—conclusions which advanced economists are now beginning to reach, and for which he was to receive little credit from an age mostly interested in his unhappy love affairs or remembering him as a Victorian art critic who wrote em-purpled prose.

Broad-Church Charles Kingsley and Frederick Dennison Maurice turned from the social contradictions of their time to a vague Christian socialism, and Thomas Carlyle—no churchman at all—had poured out gusty maledictions upon a world of unreason. The outstanding humanitarian gains of English legislation in the nineteenth century were all in debt to religious motivation. All this was in England, and the American initiative, though it could not have been uninfluenced by these English thinkers (Gladden knew his Carlyle and Ruskin; I can hear him still reading nobly from *Sartor*

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*Organised Christianity*, Thomas C. Hall, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1910. *The Story of Social Christianity*, F. H. Stind, Jones, Clarke & Co., London (1924) is brighter writing and more to this one point. Also the recent translation of Troeltsch.

<sup>2</sup> *Unto This Last. The Veins of Wealth.*

*Resartus*), was largely independent, though in 1889 a small group of Christian socialists had come together in Boston.<sup>3</sup>

## I

Dr. Gladden's concern for the social situation and his conviction that the Church had something to say about it were the outstanding aspects of his ministry.<sup>4</sup> He was born in 1836 in Pittsgrove, Pennsylvania; his father a teacher, grandfather a shoemaker and great-grandfather a soldier who had wintered with Washington at Valley Forge. So they called him Washington. He was always a teacher, a toiler, a soldier of the common good—and a saint. His reminiscences of his boyhood in Owego, New York, recreate a vanished order. The brooks were still full of trout, game ranged the mountains and a lonely small boy might spend five days on a canal freight-boat between Schenectady and Syracuse as he was passed thriftily from relative to relative. His half-orphaned boyhood was plainly and laboriously lived; he had learned before he was sixteen "to do all the kinds of work then practiced on the farm." He read aloud with his uncle by the light of a pine knot or a tallow dip before an open fire through winter evenings whose only diversions were a few books so shared. He could never, I think, have repaid his uncle for this. No one who heard him in after years could ever forget the timbre of his voice, its characteristic modulations, its restrained passion when the banked fires of indignation or noble affirmation broke through. I can hear the music of it now across the years.

He found God also after much travail of soul, and remembered fifty years later his unassisted quest when looking through the casement at the un pitying stars he sought what was beyond Orion and the Pleiades. He had found his

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<sup>3</sup> Charles and Mary Beard, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, page 420.

<sup>4</sup> *Recollections*, Washington Gladden, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1919, Chapter XX.

vocation also though he did not then know it. He served an apprenticeship in the office and composing room of a country newspaper in Owego (they will still show you the office). He shared the passions of a distracted nation in the decade before the Civil War. He decided to become a minister and chose the Congregational Church largely because of the attitude of the local church in Owego toward slavery.<sup>5</sup> He wanted "a religion that laid hold of life with both hands and proposed, first and foremost, to realize the Kingdom of God in this world."

He took his college course at Williams under Mark Hopkins, an academic contemporary of Garfield, Alden and Scudder. He wrote both the words and music for "The Mountains"—seventy classes have since made it the voice of their proud and tender loyalty to Williams. He climbed the ladder of ministerial promotion steadily, stopping awhile on the way up to become a member of the editorial staff of the New York *Independent* (his training in journalism gave a cast to all his work) and was "called" to Columbus, Ohio, in 1882. "The labor question in its most acute form" was there thrust upon him through a bitterly fought coal strike in the Hocking Valley. The General Manager and the Treasurer of the company were his parishioners, and the strike had become "a conflict over the right of the miners to organize for their own protection." "We'll kill that union," the General Manager told him, "if it costs us half a million dollars."

Dr. Gladden then and thereafter maintained the right of labor to organize. If industry was a battlefield it was only just that labor should be given a fighting chance. "If war is the order of the day we must grant to labor belligerent rights." Organized employers versus disorganized employees did not

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<sup>5</sup> Its pastor had been compelled to leave another denomination because he had prayed for the slaves—*Recollections*, page 63.

seem to him fair play. He believed "a labor union, when wisely handled and dealt with in a just and friendly spirit, not necessarily an evil thing."<sup>6</sup>

But he did not believe that war should be the order of that day or any other day. He called it "a senseless, brutal, barbarous business." He believed "the industrial system, as at present organized, is a social solecism, an attempt to hold society together upon an anti-social foundation."<sup>7</sup> The wage system, he thought, "when it rests on competition as its sole basis, is anti-social and anti-Christian." These incisive words challenged the existing economic structure. Gladden rejected, root and branch, the *laissez-faire* philosophy of the orthodox political economist. He believed that moral forces could essentially modify the economic process, that Christianity should supply that moral force, the churches nurture and release it and that the churches were recreant if they did not do just that. It was their sovereign task.

Socialism, he maintained, if it were not to become despotic demanded an intelligence and a social-mindedness nowhere then in sight. His life task was "to socialize the individual."<sup>8</sup> The next article in his creed after the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man was the transforming power of Christian goodwill. He proclaimed that, taught it, lived it, came back to it in every contingency. He was radical in his demand for changed dispositions and idealisms, less radical in his constructive program. For all his criticism of the wage-system he offered no more than profit-sharing or coöperation as a modification of it. He did advocate, or at least anticipate, the nationalization of the telegraph and the railroads, though he thought government ownership of railroads should be con-

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<sup>6</sup> *Recollections*, pages 291-92.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, page 293.

<sup>8</sup> See, for his general attitude, *Christianity and Socialism*, Eaton and Mains, New York, 1905.



fined to the tracks, these being leased for operation. He added street railways, mines, water power and public utilities as likely to be brought under public control.<sup>9</sup>

Gladden had a gift for plain statement, a journalist's flair for currents of popular interest, a prophet's passion, high courage, and a power on occasion to hit with a quiet terrible-ness. His blows were more like the thrust of a steam piston than the impact of a steam hammer—but they went home. His best known passage of arms was with the Foreign Missionary Board of his own denomination. Those gentlemen had accepted a large gift from John D. Rockefeller upon whose head Ida Tarbell's strongly documented biography had just focused a super-heated, popular indignation. Gladden hit the gift and hit it hard; it was "tainted money" and "partnership with plunderers." The pages in his *Recollections* which recall the controversy are still hot to the touch. The Church, he felt, weakened its moral position by seeking or accepting predatory wealth. The controversy flamed across the continent. The money had already been taken and partly spent by a Board from which, since it usually reported a deficit at the end of its fiscal year, there was little hope of getting it back, but Gladden felt a vital principle to be involved. It would seem to have been one of his defeats. Money is now accepted gratefully from the same sources, it is being turned into foundations and education and an excess of ornate brick and stone on college campuses. How far Gladden's attack contributed to the constructive social conscience of the present administration of the Rockefeller fortune no one can say. The churches are beginning to feel uneasily their partnership with the financial order and look a little to the character of their invested funds. Perhaps something was gained.

Dr. Gladden preached his gospel first and then made

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<sup>9</sup> *Recollections*, page 309.

books of it which were very widely read.<sup>10</sup> The younger generation of ministers came strongly under his influence. I doubt if the ministry of any preacher of his time reached further or was of a more pregnant quality. He wrote his best known and loved hymn, "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee," in a time of trying theological controversy and lived by it. He was always a liberal and did much to educate his congregation and readers in new conceptions of the Bible, though many of his positions would now be considered conservative. The Rev. William A. Sunday, being irritated by Gladden's criticism of his theology and technique, is said to have called him a bald-headed old mutt! Gladden had spoken of Sunday with equal candor but with finer literary finish. He died during the war sad at heart for he had always hated war. A little before his death he wrote a little poem whose last line was "Death is good for tired eyes." His eyes had seen much and far; he did not fear to close them. Columbus honors his memory but it is not, above other cities, conspicuous for its applications of his teachings.

## II

Rauschenbusch considered the social aspects of Christianity from the chair of Church History in Rochester Theological Seminary. He was saved that detachment from the less sequestered activities of life which such chairs are said to nurture, by a preliminary eleven-year pastorate among the working people on the West Side of New York City and by his eager and sensitive spirit. He did not altogether escape the professorial tendency to deal critically and exhaustively with everything about which he wrote. Nor had he Gladden's genius for using currents of public interest to float his craft.

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<sup>10</sup> I had occasion to get at one time from the Detroit Public Library every book of his on the shelves. They were worn with reading and pencil marked in a way to pain the Librarian.

His books are not likely to have been worn so loose by much reading in public libraries.

He did occupy the strategic position of a teacher who trained for years the liberal ministers of a great denomination, and his books had a wide influence on the thinking of preachers. He examined, as an historian, the forces which had deflected Christianity from its social ministry and made it excessively ecclesiastical and theological, and he pleaded for the recovery of that ministry with a moving passion given gritty reality by a detailed account of the piteous estate of the poor. He sought so to recast theology as to furnish a support for a social gospel. But even for Walter Rauschenbusch this was pouring new wine into old wine-skins. His first book, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*,<sup>11</sup> was published at a strategic time; those forces which were combining to give the liberal ministry a sense of the loss of vocation had begun to make their massed forces tell, the pulpit was beginning to feel for a message. Rauschenbusch supplied it positive content and a note of realism.

He did more in his *Prayers of the Social Awakening*<sup>12</sup>—he did far more. He recalled prayer from its easy confessions of unitemized sins, its self-centeredness and its rather insistent demand that the Eternal give particular attention to the supplicant and his more intimate associates, to a travail of the spirit for the sorrow and weariness of our common humanity. He suggested new kinds of sins for which forgiveness should be sought, sins which had even masqueraded as virtues. He suggested other felicities to be prayed for than heavenly rest. He did what the old litanies had done for their own world and time; he carried to God the perils of modernity as well as the timeless perils of life. He would, if he had thought of it, prayed for deliverance from pirates but he would have

<sup>11</sup> The Macmillan Company, New York, 1907.

<sup>12</sup> The Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1910.

been as specific as the language of devotion permits in indicating the forms piracy had latterly taken.

There were prayers for morning, noon and night, for social groups and classes, for immigrants and employers, women who work, artists, judges, politicians and the public press. There were "prayers of wrath" against war and mammon, alcohol and unchastity, prayers of generous and kindling hope. Nothing quite like this had ever been done before. Time sifts prayers as it sifts everything else; his will eventually find their own place in the world's treasury of prayers—a most revealing treasure if we only knew how to appraise it, but the influence of what he began may now be traced through all the recent liturgies of the Protestant churches. Prayer has thereby been given a new spirit and content. What gets into prayers gets into the very structure of the religious spirit and mind with a power to persist and direct far beyond exhortation or teaching. It is thereafter, as poetry is, a part of the enduring deposit of the human quest.

### III

The history of the growing concern of the American churches for a more Christian social order must be traced through the changing mind of the churches and their ministry rather than through actual modifications of the social and economic order. It belongs even yet to a rather immaterial dimension; the debates of church congresses, conventions, assemblies, or whatever else the Protestant communions call their representative bodies. It has been largely a matter of resolution, program and platform. The Church has no agency through which to reach or affect the social order save the mind and will of its constituency acting in their secular capacity. It may propose ideal ends and support its propositions with every moral and religious force at its command but its ideals, if they are to become real, must eventually become incarnate in legis-

lation, the practical conduct of business, around the tables of boards of directors, in political economy and the actual going economic order.

These are realistic sentences but they recite stubborn facts. Other history can be written in terms of what has been done. Here is a history which can be written only in terms of what has been sought, sometimes only in terms of what has been dreamed. It is easily possible to make a glowing recital of it, to show the Church marching like a mighty army with proud banners against poverty, war and social injustice but when one turns from programs to actual accomplishment the contrast is sobering. The social gospel ought not, for all that, to be too lightly dismissed. The mind of any time is a part of its history—often in retrospect the most significant aspect of its history. Whatever the social and economic issues of the future may be, no future historian of public opinion in America for the forty years beginning 1890 can ignore the mind of the Church without losing the key to a deal of the pragmatic history of the same period.

The lines which Gladden and Rauschenbusch opened were followed by an increasing number of religious leaders and followed deeper and more analytically. Such as these began to draw the outlines, at least, of what a Christian society ought, according to their mind, to be. In December, 1908, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America adopted what has come to be known as "The Social Creed of the Churches."

This was a highly significant document for three reasons. For the first time in the history of Christianity an attempt was made to define Christianity in terms of the ethics of Jesus instead of the theological speculations of fourth and fifth century Greek-Church councils. The Creed represented the maximum agreement of the churches composing the Council on the contours of a right Christian social order. And leaving

## THE CHURCH DISCOVERS THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

out "Christian"—which provocative word is not in the Creed at all—it is, as far as the writer knows, one of the earliest coherent programs of social ameliorization to be realized through education, legislation and industrial readjustment submitted in America. And it was offered for the guidance of what has proved in the long run the most effective public opinion in America. For these reasons it has an epochal quality and is here given in full.

### THE SOCIAL CREED OF THE CHURCHES

ADOPTED DECEMBER 4, 1908

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America stands:

For equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.

For the abolition of child labor.

For such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

For the suppression of the "Sweating System."

For the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is the condition of the highest human life.

For a release from employment one day in seven.

For the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, a right ever to be wisely and strongly safeguarded against encroachments of every kind.

For the right of workers to some protection against the hardships often resulting from the swift crises of industrial change.

For a living wage as a minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

For the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational disease, injuries, and mortality.

For suitable provision for the old age of the workers and for those incapacitated by injury.

## RELIGION IN OUR TIMES

For the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions.

For the abatement of poverty.

For the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised.

These articles gave definite content and objective to the social thinking of such ministers and members of the churches as thought socially at all. They were by no means the unique contribution of church leaders; some of them had been already embodied in English legislation and the legislation of the more forward-looking American states. Others were being pressed by labor organizations, which have in their demand for humane legislation often outrun the churches. They were in many ways aspects of the rapidly developing humanitarianism of the period whose confluent ideals it would be impossible to trace to all their sources, but which have always, among other things, been some fertilizing wash of Christianity far beyond its ecclesiastical channels.

### IV

The social creed of the churches is still far enough from being the social conduct of church members but a vast deal else than Christian social conduct has come of the quest for it. It has created a really enormous literature. This literature has naturally varied in quality but the best has sound thinking in it and is a contribution to present-day social understanding. The Creeds and the Gospels have been re-examined from a new point of view, many things have doubtless been read into them through an excess of zeal, but the Gospels particularly have suffered that before and from a less praiseworthy zeal. The social reactions of Jesus have been studied under a microscope. Such study along with the modern sense of the relation of any religion to its environment has led to new and fruitful examinations of the world of Jesus and the New Testa-

ment. No recent biography of Jesus is uninfluenced by the "social trend."

"Jesus Christ and—," "Christianity and—" are significant titles in any preacher's library. What follows "and" may mean the family or the social problem or the civilization of today, or whatever else the author can think of. The "and" is actually more significant than what follows, since it is an attempt to test Western civilization by the ideals and method of Jesus and suggest the changes which would follow the recasting of society in a consistently Christian mold. Francis Greenwood Peabody did telling work in this field. He examined the teachings of Jesus for their social implications and authority, he examined contemporaneous society for the fault and possibility of it, he indicated lines of practical Christian advance. He was, like his socially minded contemporaries, a Christian individualist. Society, he maintained, would be changed only by changed men and women.

The generation which followed had far less confidence in this method. They had little hope of social victory through lonely goodness. They would begin with the social setting and trust that to create a new Christian personality. But they continued the social quest. Practically every book which now seeks to re-establish religion upon foundations consonant with the modern Western mind is built structurally upon a "social" framework.<sup>18</sup> Silver's brilliant *Religion in a Changing World* is an excellent contemporaneous example of this. On the other hand when Tagore in an equally brilliant book interpreted religion as a poet and mystic, restating in singing English the timeless quest of India for unity with God, the orthodox critics read it sadly and qualified their critiques. The Western world is seeking another kind of unity.

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<sup>18</sup> This statement is open to grave qualifications. A literature bearing upon the reality and nature of God is beginning to displace the literature of the social gospel. We are in for a period of neo-theological thinking and writing.



The "social gospel" has so far been a life preserver for twentieth century preaching. Ministers, sensitive to the bearing of changed conceptions of the Bible and the conclusions of science and psychology upon their inherited beliefs, were getting hard pressed to find anything to preach which bore creatively upon life. The sermon as an end in itself, written in scholarly detachment and heard for the sheer joy of hearing it, was beginning to lose its appeal. It was not yet in competition with the radio; it was in competition with periodicals whose essay-articles had as much preaching in them as human nature seemed to need, more literary art than most preachers were equal to and a very taking up-to-dateness. The minister had no longer even a monopoly of the interpretation of life since thoughtful literary criticism often dealt with life in a way to make a deal of preaching both crude and shallow. Christianity had been, for the generality, the accepted philosophy of life; now competitive philosophies began to be popularized. Also the times were growing more sophisticated.

"The world is mine again," the perplexed preacher might have said when he discovered the social gospel. He took it gladly; if it proved rather too large to handle the every amplitude of it was compensation. The ministry has by no means narrowed its message to the social field. But it has used economic and industrial situations for illustration and application with a growing inevitability. The more capable young men entering the ministry directly before and after the World War were largely motivated by the desire to take part in the "holy war" for social justice. The curricula of theological seminaries have been recast to train them. Social statistics have taken the place of Hebrew tenses, and theology holds its own with difficulty against an exposition of "the new social order."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The seminaries were not quite so responsive as this sentence implies. I can discover few courses in the social application of Christianity in the catalogs of, say, 1890. In 1895 Andover offered an inclusive course in "social ethics." In 1924 (see *Theological Education in America*, Robert I. Kelley,

Even the hymn books voiced (quite literally) the change. The churches in their worshipful exercises of congregational singing continued to praise and repent, hope and believe, but they did sing with less enthusiasm—

“How long shall earth’s alluring toys  
 Detain our hearts and eyes,  
 Regardless of immortal joys,  
 And strangers to the skies?”

“There Is a Land of Pure Delight” has gone from up-to-date hymn books. The devout no longer stand “on Jordan’s stormy banks”; they wait for the green light

“Where cross the crowded ways of life  
 Where sound the cries of race and clan.”

And something has gone. These old hymns sung by quavering voices and read by dim eyes which had no need of the text were the marching music of pilgrims for whom earth and its shadows were only a stage on the road to heaven. There eternal day would exclude the night and pleasure banish pain. This confidence in one form or another has hitherto been the sustaining power of all religion. Over against it the Soviet Republic has written on the walls of the Kremlin “Religion is the opiate of the people.” Time will judge between them.

Most contemporaneous hymns fit new words of social responsibility to the old music of other-worldly longing or the quest for mystic peace. They limp a bit sometimes and preach too much—which Lowell says poetry should never do. But they sound the dominant religious note of their time.

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George H. Doran Company, New York) 82 out of 103 seminaries studied offered no courses dealing with the church and industry. In 1932 Colgate-Rochester (to take a catalog nearest to hand) offered eight courses in social ethics. Seminaries affiliated with universities recommend the use of the departments of sociology, and Union in New York seems almost to specialize in social ethics. The situation is still uneven.

There would seem to be, on the other hand, a reaction in secular poetry from social didactics set to strange meters. The anthologies of *Best Poems* for 1929 and 1930<sup>15</sup> contain a few experiments in mechanics, interstate power for example—

“On loaded wires the roll call of the states  
Has left the gears of half the nation meshed  
By a Norn power, unseen, intangible.”

(Politicians as well as poets seem to sense this.) But modern poetry is seeking again its native land of dreams and beauty. It may be that one will hereafter read an anthology of magazine verse with more serenity of soul than a hymn book.

There has been since the beginning of the century a renaissance of poetry about Jesus. It had been mostly confined to hymn books; latterly the makers of anthologies have found abundant material some of which would startle any hymn book.<sup>16</sup> Much of it translates the narratives of the Gospels into briefer, slighter song. Some of it is the imitation of Christ given such form as fits a time so far removed from Thomas à Kempis and his cloister, but what is most distinctly modern identifies Him with the toiling and forgotten, sees Him crucified by pride and power. These poets set the Cross against the skylines as no theological symbol but a travail to be shared for the world's redemption. And the yearning of many of the best of these poems for the way and spirit of Jesus is perhaps—for the poet always says the last word—the revelation of a discontent with our present mundane estate which may herald the real renaissance of religion.

“O City of the Carpenter,  
Upon the hill slope old and gray,  
The world amid its pain and stir  
Turns yearning eyes on thee today.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> T. Moulton, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.

<sup>16</sup> *The Master of Men*, Thomas Curtis Clark, Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York, 1930. *Christ in the Poetry of Today*, Martha Foote Crow, The Woman's Press, New York, 1918.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Sangster, in *The Master of Men*, page 213.

## VI

I do not think all this can be credited entirely to the churches or their ministers. There is a general contagion of ideas in any period, a give-and-take controlled by the time-spirit which directs the thinking of an epoch. Church leaders have certainly availed themselves of the material supplied by the social scientist; it is hardly possible that the inquiring secular social mind has remained uninfluenced by the demand of the Church for the redemption of the social order. Actually this same social order has faced them all, crying out for creative consideration. The morally sensitive felt its strains first and judged it by its unchristian character; it was bad religion. The sociological student examined it next and found it functioned very unhappily. As this is being written the very practical economists of Wall Street and the great corporations are beginning to find out that it is poor economics and bad business. Perhaps between them all something will get done. But the prophet—if he be a true prophet—is usually in the best position to say “I told you so.”

There is a gradation in all these things. The vision of the prophet is winged, the insight of the moralist appraises a situation swiftly because he deals with broad principles and draws from the funded experience of the race. The conclusions of the sociologist are more slowly reached; he has to assemble and sift a multitude of facts, some of them obscure, many of them changing beneath his touch as he seizes them. The economist moves more slowly still; he has not only to wait on the demonstration of time, but he has also to get free from systems which, through long acceptance, have been labeled “orthodox,” a label which gives staying power to a good deal which would fall apart if it were taken off. Last of all come the captains and lieutenants of industry with little power and less willingness to change the system which makes them captains and lieutenants, for apparently unprofitable

experiments. Politicians and legislators may be said to attend as skirmishers with an eye for cover. No wonder social progress is slow.

The social gospel was reinforced during the first decade and a half of the new century by the general indignation of America at the high-handed way of these same captains of industry. The small, independent businesses of American tradition had begun to feel the competition of the "corporations." Investigating commissions took the "lid off" various cauldrons in which "big business" was cooked and the public held its nose. Roosevelt at his best and Wilson during his first administration powerfully aroused the then dormant but always responsive ethical idealism of the nation. Social legislation was abundant and not always wise. Much of it was later seen to be in opposition to economic trends which no legislation could check or much deflect, but a sound content of humanitarian legislation was written into federal and state codes. The social gospel was in tune with the times and could claim a fair share in pitching the tune.

It was not universally accepted even in the churches. A church is never entirely the communion of saints in world-proof compartments. It is a cross-section of society, founded upon religious faith and held together by ecclesiastical organization. It is usually a fellowship of the morally earnest and spiritually sensitive but it is pervious to the world. Their church is always only one aspect of the lives of the faithful, supplies only one group of their motivations. Directly the social gospel ceased to be merely a glowing enthusiasm and became a program, directly it challenged the going concern of business, directly the radical implications of it began to be realized, there was a reaction. Many of the impressive resolutions had after all been drawn by conferences, assemblies and councils where the parson did most of the talking. The lay-

man listened, voted dutifully or doubtfully and forgot it when he got home.

Realistic laymen were, and have remained, more largely untouched by the whole movement than is generally supposed. I was during all this period the minister of two churches whose congregations included men of station and force in highly industrialized cities. I do not think they shared the official social passion of the communion to which they belonged, knew much or cared much about it. That they knew no more was probably the fault of their minister. But, as far as they did know, their response lacked warmth. The more conservative were politely hostile. I once heard the most gracious of deacons protesting as he came away from a men's class led by a socially minded college professor: "These questions have no place in a church." His reaction was essentially religious as he understood religion. His church was committed, so he held, to a "spiritual" ministry. The clamor of the world should be halted at its doors, no disturbing shadow should darken its richly pictured windows. It was for the peace and salvation of his soul; everything else belonged somewhere else and had six days a week in which to bother him. He was by no means in the minority.

The doctrinally conservative were suspicious of the social gospel or positively hostile. It was associated with a theology they suspected and tarred with the same stick. It was, they thought and did not hesitate to say heatedly, a deflection from the true gospel, a device of those who had no essentially religious message to find something to preach about. Which was true enough to have an edge to it.

VII

Then the war came and American idealism suffered its eclipse. What the Church did with the war belongs to another chapter. What the war did to the glowing hopes of the

dawning twentieth Christian century belongs to history. It is sadly possible to check noble project after noble project, the rising promise and partial realization of long-held visions, and say that on June 28, 1914, all these were ended for a long generation by a pistol shot in Sarajevo. Many other things, including the bright promise of the youth of Europe, were ended forever; even those who came back left their youth in the trenches—and youth was the hope of the social gospel. Grandiose religious “drives” born of the technique of war organization and propaganda survived the armistice a year or so. Then the dreamer was left to reassemble his dreams out of their broken parts, as they gathered out of the dust the windows of bombarded cathedrals. If he got them together you saw what was gone and that their unity had been shattered. The prophet had the satisfaction, which is often the only wage he gets, of saying “I told you so”; it was a melancholy satisfaction.

For another decade the disillusioned had little use for any idealism, and six or seven years of hectic prosperity convinced the politician, the industrialist and the public that there were no problems of any sort, save spending their gains. Why bother about the Kingdom of God in a “bull market”? Besides, successive presidents announced its actual arrival. There are, at this writing, signs of a renaissance of social concern. Those who grope half-blinded by the dust of its collapse, amidst the ruins of the structure they built so proudly, are beginning dimly to see that moral judgments have in them always some fateful quality of the day of judgment and may well be given some attention. They are beginning to see that bad morality is bad economics, that Bishop Butler, who is not much quoted on the Stock Exchange, was right when he said: “Morality is the nature of things.” If they find their way into a sounder order by the painful road of economic trial and error, I do not know that the Christian social moralist should

quarrel with them. He will simply be waiting for them when they arrive.

"The Social Creed of the Churches" would probably be read now with more respect than at any time in thirty years. It lies directly in the line of the forward-looking social and economic thought of the period. The reader may now if he cares turn back to it and check off what has been lost or gained since 1908. In the copy I am using I have set down possible percentages of realization. I have put the highest percentage against protection from dangerous machinery and occupational disease. One must probably still put zero against the last article. The rest register varying progress.

In such ways as these the factual outcome of forty years of the social gospel can be measured. At the best it is not much, but it is something. I think the actual gains have been made in the slow creation of an increasing body of public opinion taking such forms as have already been suggested. The mind of a nation matured through such forces, tempered in such fires as have shaped American social and industrial life cannot quickly be changed. The machinery it has built of purpose, or unwittingly, has enormous momentum. The social gospel challenged triumphant industrialism in the zenith of its power—*vox et praeterea nihil*—a voice and nothing more. It has now become something more. The science of sociology—if sociology is a science—has come to the help of the Christian idealist.

It has been entirely recast. After the war the sociologist began a laborious investigation of social facts; the distribution of wealth, family income, standards of living, occupational uncertainty, industrial hazard, poverty, dependency, sickness, mental incompetency, moral delinquency, broken homes, social maladjustments.<sup>18</sup> What he discovered astounded and sobered

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<sup>18</sup> These, for example, are in part chapter headings from *The Revised* (1932) *Edition of Social Problems*, The Century Co., New York City.



him. The delusive prosperity of America veiled a portentous menace to the safety of the state. (Even so late as 1930 the most distinguished political spokesmen in America seemed unbelievably ignorant of these facts.) The sociologist saw society as a problem and "human well-being" (Bossard for example) as the only valid end of social endeavor. The ends toward which he began to direct the minds of his classes were exactly the ends the Christian idealist was seeking.

The social gospel thus gained the sanction of the sociologist; the forward-looking industrialist became less hostile to it. The outcome is beyond calculation, but the Church revived forgotten or overlain elements of its commission when it faced its social responsibility. Society now shares increasingly that sense of responsibility. It will have no peace until it discharges it. Perhaps the Christian vision will prove to have first foreseen the practical program of social well-being and the religious spirit to have supplied the passion, the endurance and the courage to carry it through.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> A history like this is bound to be always unfinished. It should be noted that the Christian idealism of 1932 has gone far toward advocating the socialized state—Reinhold Niebuhr, whose influence over the younger generation is very great, Kirby Page and Sherwood Eddy are representatives of this movement.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RISE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

THEODORE ROOSEVELT took time from the cares of the Presidential office to write, in 1906, an introduction to a very detailed account of the activities of St. George's Parish in New York<sup>1</sup> under the leadership of D. W. S. Rainsford. "The Church," he said, "must be a living, breathing, vital force or it is no real Church." St. George's would have satisfied in every way even Roosevelt's passion for the strenuous life. It was then the most variously and completely institutionalized church in America. Dr. Rainsford had not been the pioneer in what has since been known as the "institutional church." That honor is difficult to assign, though Thomas K. Beecher of Elmira would be a strong competitor.

He had his full share of the genius of the Beecher family, a holy disregard for ecclesiastical conventions, a gift for preaching with a tang to it and a vision impatient of near horizons. The church he built looks a little more like a town hall than a House of God but the utilitarian spaciousness of it is still in prophetic contrast with the churches of the period in central New York. He added to the traditional church-week programs a variety of social activities which might nominate him the father of the institutional church—though he certainly would have given his child a more felicitous name.

When Roosevelt wrote his introduction to which Bishop Henry C. Potter added a second written from Luxor, Egypt, St. George's was beginning to be held up by the *Outlook* (then at the top of its power) as the best example of what a city church might be and do and a present realization of what

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<sup>1</sup> *The Administration of an Institutional Church*, Hodges and Reichart, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1906.

the churches must become. Dr. Rainsford was Charles Kingsley's masculine Christianity ideally incarnate. He was splendid in presence, a big-game hunter, magnetic, tireless, unflinching in resource. He took over an old "pewed parish church"—much like Hanover Square in London—with a tradition of "first families" and social glamor, which had fallen upon trying days. St. George's—and other—first families were building themselves marble chateaux and brownstone palaces on Fifth Avenue, and the neighborhood was filling up with almost the densest population in the world of east-side folk. Many of them were also first families but their priority did not appeal to Ward McAllister and the "Four Hundred"; they were simply the first generation of immigrants.

Only about twenty families of the old congregation remained in the parish. ". . . nothing increased but the annual deficit." Within ten years Rainsford, who had begun as the rector of empty pews and a deficit, made St. George's the wonder of New York, the envy, maybe, and the ideal, certainly, of other ministers who preached to more or less empty pews, labored—and prayed—with their official boards over deficits and saw the tides of attendance and interest ebbing from their church doors.

To this situation, created both by the then rapidly changing character of American cities, the breaking up of old residence centers and the more imponderable breaking up of old habits, Rainsford brought the invaluable contribution of a new method. Rainsford himself said that his predecessors had been like fishermen accustomed to fish for herrings: "Presently the run of herrings goes away from that section of the sea; in their place comes a tremendous run of smelts."<sup>2</sup> The smelts, Rainsford felt, were worth catching—even more desirable fish—but the fisherman must change the meshes of his net to get them. The acute authors put all that in a plain sentence or

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<sup>2</sup> *The Administration of an Institutional Church*, page xxii.

two which are the key to far-reaching changes in Protestant church methods. "The old methods had been adapted to the family; the new method was adapted to the individual. The essential principle of the institutional church is in that change."<sup>8</sup>

## I

New York was then, as now, a laboratory for social experiment. Whatever happened anywhere happened there, quickly, intensely, with highlights. The sovereignty of the city magnified it all and cast it upon the screen for the country to see. Rainsford had the peculiar advantage of being himself and having J. Pierpont Morgan as his best known vestryman, but his method was capable of modification and wide adaptation. In one form or another the conditions he faced and overcame were common to the older churches in all American cities—and a church grew old quickly in Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit or Cleveland. There was, besides, the fascination of a vital, going concern. What minister impatient of the monotonous peace of his book-lined study would not want to see himself the acclaimed center of such far-reaching activities?

Something of the background for this chapter has been already drawn. All the churches, Catholic and Protestant, had fallen into very settled habits. The Catholic habit was enriched by the solemnity of the Mass and the colorful contributions of the Christian year; Protestant Episcopal habit also followed the contours of the Christian year and were given a rich, worshipful content by the Book of Common Prayer. Evangelical Protestantism depended much more upon preaching. Its orders of worship were simple though their simplicity was quite as standardized as the Mass. Rather more so; for the Mass could be shortened to the essential mystic transaction of it or expanded to fill a cathedral with color, incense and

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, page xxiv.

music. The Protestant "preliminary service" was less elastic. The church auditoriums were opened once a week for morning and evening service. In the northern winters the janitor began to heat them—they had grown very cold indeed—Saturday afternoons and evenings. The heating equipment being often antiquated, the result was problematical, and shivering saints tested the temperature inquiringly as they came in Sunday morning. Some premonitory chill of the next six days' frigidity was often felt before evening worship was ended. The fires were beginning to go out again.

All churches carried a margin of missionary societies, guilds, Christian Endeavor Societies, Epworth Leagues. These were all focused upon the distinctly religious function of the Church. They were no more than the general family life of the parish or congregation patterned according to sex, age and interests. The church "socials" assembled, with ecclesiastical sanction, people who were constantly meeting each other in other ways, and often in a stiff uncomfortable room where the more devout had met for prayer on Wednesday evening and the women—who could get away from home—for sanctified sewing and some interchange of neighborhood news Tuesdays or Fridays.

The pastor moved in his stately orbit through all these functions. He was likely to be a little distraught at evening meeting because he had spent the afternoon in pastoral calling and next Sunday's sermon was beginning to weigh on his mind. The more prosperous churches had an assistant who helped about the calling, looked after the young people and the Sunday school and preached in the pastor's absence. The socially conservative churches got the money for all this from their "pew rentals." That system was coming under suspicion as deficient in some of the more essential qualities of Christian brotherhood (Rainsford's first demand at St. George's was a "free church"), but since the work of the churches assumed

the family as a unit there was much to be said for the family pew. And if the pastor were popular enough, the "rentals" paid the "expense of public worship."<sup>4</sup>

This decorous program has now been greatly changed. Even the most steady going churches reflect the change, the more adventurous have been transformed by it. Sunday morning is much the same except for changed orders of worship (of which more later) which register a new sense of the worth of worship in the non-liturgical communions. Sunday evening is what the minister is able to make it, but the week's activities would surprise—and perhaps pain—the generation now mostly remembered in memorial windows. There might be "bridge" on Monday, basketball on Tuesday, a church dinner followed by some ingenious survival of the prayer meeting on Wednesday, dramatics on Thursday, dancing on Friday, with a program which leaves few hours of the afternoon or evening untaken. The church itself is often kept open "for prayer and meditation" and is kept warm, if for no other reason than to keep the organ in tune. All this has recast church finance, architecture, organization, leadership, the relation of the churches to their environments, and the Church's own conception of its function.

## II

These generalizations need now to be supported by some reasonably detailed examination of the organization and technique of specific churches. There is no scarcity of material. The *Studies of the City Church*<sup>5</sup> made by H. Paul Douglass furnish authoritative material, gathered at the sources by a most competent investigator and well organized. I would

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<sup>4</sup>I have put these trite phrases in quotation marks because they are a part of the official phraseology of the time.

<sup>5</sup>Published by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York.

better begin, however, with St. George's itself because it supplied at a strategic time a pattern widely copied. The financial support Rainsford was able to command and the complex social and racial elements in his parish made the magnitude of his work beyond the resource or need of many churches which took it for a pattern. There has been among all institutionalized churches a good deal of not cutting the pattern to the cloth.

St. George's had in 1906 thirteen salaried workers who gave their entire time to its work—the Rector, four assistant ministers, the Rector's secretary, the organist, three deaconesses, three parish workers (one a trained nurse)—and the branch secretary of the Girls Friendly Society. The duties of the thirteen were clearly defined. Organizations were definitely assigned for oversight, districts plotted for visiting. Deaconess S., for example, represented the Rector in the King's Daughters and the Chancel Committee; half of 16th Street, 12th, 11th and 10th Streets; 6th Street and intersecting avenues were her parish. She had assigned duties in the Sunday school, the missionary society, at baptisms and mothers' meetings. Evidently she was trusted and capable; her schedule stretches across a tabulated page. Miss R. had nothing but the half of 16th and 19th Streets and intersecting avenues and a Bible class.

Religious education was already, so early as 1906, being much changed. St. George's did no more in this department than carry through very thorough department organization, graded lessons and add extra biblical subjects. Hymns proper to the ages and theological understanding of the children were prescribed, especial care was taken with the worship services. Other churches were doing as much as this. St. George's added a trade school, taught boys wood-working, mechanical drawing, plumbing, manual training, free-hand drawing. There were athletics, of course, and a cadet battalion. The boys in this

department of the Church Militant had a military director, a rifle range in the basement of the Parish House, the use of the Sixty-Ninth Regiment armory hall for drill purposes and a summer encampment.

Girls were taught basket weaving, cooking, sewing from basting to button-holes—and thrift. There were men's clubs, a married women's society, mothers' meeting, a Happy Hour Club, a Sunday Afternoon Club, a Dramatic and Literary Society. The church conducted a cooperative grocery, furnished needy women with sewing and disposed of the articles and garments in various ways. The sick were cared for, the city-worn mothers and children sent to the seashore. The finances are a study in themselves. The treasurer's account for 1905 shows a little more than \$115,000 received and expended (special repairs \$30,000 plus). The endowments yielded \$17,500, the rest was from pledges and offerings and all this "to meet the conditions of a crowded neighborhood in a great city" in a Christian way. Dr. Rainsford made every person thus reached or used a part of the corporate life of St. George's and kept St. George's "a church, a place of religion expressing itself in all these various ways."<sup>6</sup>

The "parish house" made all this physically possible. Institutionalism captured the imagination of the American churches, and the first quarter of the century saw the architecture and organization of the Protestant denominations transformed by it. Churches without parish houses began to build them and provoked their more or less competitive neighbors to similar good works. New churches were built in units with the church house part of the original plan. Often the "house" was built before the church.<sup>7</sup>

The situation and needs of the individual church were not always carefully studied. Hypothetical programs got built

<sup>6</sup> All this summarized from Hodges and Reichart, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> In one instance with which I am familiar the church never did get built.



into brick and stone before they had been tried out in experience, and a very considerable maladjustment resulted (gymnasiums, for example, for which churches went in wholeheartedly have not done so well) and in the industrial cities of the Interior which had, during the period studied, an enormous growth, a decade brought to many churches changed conditions to which their expensive structures were not adapted. The movement has, however, so far maintained itself.<sup>8</sup> Paul Douglass's studies show how many elements have to be taken into consideration in the adaptation of the churches to changing city conditions (the institutional church is distinctly urban): population density, racial elements, economic status, housing, percentages of family groups and individuals, distance zones of constituency from the church, transportation, stability or fluidity of environment.

To these factors which may be tabulated (and which change before the tables are printed) must be added factors which cannot be tabulated—the temper and tradition of the churches, their catholic or exclusive spirit, social or theological attitudes and other imponderables; buildings alone will not

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<sup>8</sup> A detailed examination of the losses and gains is impossible here. There has been great duplication. There are three spaciouly expensive Protestant houses in Auburn (38,000 inhabitants), two of them belonging to the same denomination and about ten minutes walk apart. One passes with short detours an inadequate Y. M. C. A. and a well equipped Woman's Union in the transit. A part of what they all do is non-sectarian; one house with an assignment of times and space would go far toward serving both Presbyterian churches. The Y. M. C. A., if it were adequate, could provide for church gymnastics and athletic groups. The city is building a new high school which will in that department duplicate all the churches are doing for young people of high school age. The churches of the future might well take into account the development of public school equipment. In most large cities regional Y. M. C. A.'s have an equipment and staff for this kind of religio-social work with which the churches cannot compete. And the support of the whole over-built business comes back to the same population groups. The future of religious education, many specialists think, lies with week-day religious education rather than church school. Others think the church houses might better be neighborhood houses built where the people live instead of on Main Street or the avenues. Something like this was proposed in Chicago. I do not know if anything has been done about it. Churches which have carried on very successfully for a long time with their "plants" have doubled their usable room without doubling their constituency. Some other consequences of all this are noted in the text.

adapt any church to changing conditions. Seventy-three per cent of the adherents of the twenty-six churches studied are twenty years old and over; eight per cent are adolescents and nineteen per cent are children. About half of the total attendance on all church activities is on a Sunday.<sup>9</sup> The Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago has a paid staff of fifteen, Central Methodist of Detroit has nine. "Four full-time and one half-time religious workers [are] just about average." Representative budgets run from \$26,410 to \$112,485; total annual attendance upon everything a church does ranges from 25,668 to 183,593. The ratio between total attendances and expense is interesting. In one instance the cost is \$200 a year, and a little more, per hundred. Central Methodist in Detroit does its great work at a cost of about \$48 per hundred annual attendance. Another old and wealthy church spends "about \$66 a year for every hundred of attendance upon stated organizations and activities." The most economical church spent about \$35 per hundred. If new communicants (not transferred from other churches) were charged against these budgets, they would come very high indeed.

What do these churches do? They keep their doors open seven days a week. They "preach the gospel" Sunday mornings (and occasionally other things of a more ephemeral character Sunday evenings). They carry on religious education along a wide front. They have ladies' aids, guilds and missionary societies, the denominational young people's organizations or something the pastor or proper member of the staff has

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<sup>9</sup> Dr. Douglass does not give the communicant membership of the churches; a varying percentage of attendance is always transient Sunday mornings—more evenings. The writer's conclusions, checked by the experience of others, is that from 20% to 25% of the membership of churches of over seven hundred and fifty members are constant as they can be in attendance and support. As many more attend with marginal irregularity. Another third acknowledge responsibility, attend once or twice a month during the winter. In larger churches with a widely scattered constituency 20% at the least are entirely nominal. (This excludes "absent members.") These percentages are tentative; they will compare very favorably with lodges and other associations.

thought of himself; they have men's organizations and classes (variously named), Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, other boys' and girls' clubs, chorus choirs, choirs of assorted age and gender, orchestras, bands, lectures, libraries, concerts, mothers' meetings, luncheon clubs, dinners, suppers, teas, dramatics, athletics, sewing classes, domestic science, employment offices, visiting nurses, health classes, day nurseries, dispensaries and clinics, civics and economics classes—Douglass names thirty-three typical organizations and activities.

Dr. Douglass lists thirty-three organizations and activities reported by representative churches but few churches have actually so many; less than fifty per cent of the churches studied have anything beyond Sunday services, Sunday school, women's and young people's societies, a men's organization and general social events—only five per cent have visiting nurses, only three per cent dispensaries or clinics, only one per cent civics and economics classes. The work of the churches, generally, is actually far more standardized than the long list of activities would seem to indicate. Their equipment is far less standardized.

They have drawers of card indexes, a telephone exchange, elevators, files, reports, typewriters, addressographs, mimeographs, offices, studies, stereopticons, moving picture outfits, printing plants, electric signs, bulletin boards, calendars, church papers, baths, toilets, drinking fountains, swimming pools, billiard tables and bowling alleys, illumined crosses. All this and more have seemed necessary perfectly to adapt a Protestant city church to its changing environment.

### III

Everything has reflected the change—a changed type of minister has been called for—and he has changed. The cloistered cleric has gone with the frock coat and white tie he used to wear. He wears bright business clothes week-days and

generally a gown on Sunday. He may possibly change his spats from gray to black before he enters the pulpit. He is a man among men, civically recognized and much in demand. He sings with Rotarians and answers to his first name at Kiwanis Clubs. He discusses finance with men of affairs at one o'clock and tells a woman's club about his last visit to Russia or Bagdad at four o'clock. He has met his staff at nine o'clock and spent a telephone-punctuated season of meditation in his "study." He belongs to good clubs, plays (with exceptions) good golf which he excuses as a parochial duty and a physical means of grace. He reads as much as his predecessors and far more vital books, though he spends less time with his Hebrew and Greek. He is "up" on art, literature, music and the drama. And he preaches well—he has to.

The representative pastor of a strong church is a picked man with rare natural faculties, rich in practical and disciplined experience. He can hold his own with the leaders of business and the other professions. The politicians who occasionally meet him often find they have met their match. He is as unlike the "pattern" minister of the movie or the stage as "came the dawn" is unlike the normal issues of life. The ministry in America has maintained its place in the structure of society consistently.

Such men naturally emerge out of the competition (for it is that) of the entire ministry; they are much in demand and the churches bid high for them. The result has been a marked increase in salaries paid commanding combinations of preacher and executive and a widespread inequality between the station of the ministerial elect and the average minister. The inequities of this are being recognized and there are proposals (strong with the Methodists) to correct them. Money has come to be a crucial factor in the life of the churches. (Perhaps it always has been; even St. Paul mentions it.) Conservative wealth has protested the social gospel, welcomed and

supported the institutional church. It has seemed safer, and more true to the gospel of getting and giving.

This borderline of church activity has in some part created its own support but it has greatly increased the need for money. Church finance has been reorganized to meet the need. "Every member canvasses"—the name explains itself—are a part of the yearly program. They are prepared for carefully, preached for prayerfully and carried through by trained teams. Bulletins of progress are issued and the result leaves a confident or anxious body of trustees, stewards, wardens or whatever else a church has; also, if it goes badly, an uneasy pastor. Here, when the last word is said, is where he succeeds or fails. Constant financial pressure certainly keeps some out of the churches and alienates others in them. The anxieties of most churches are fundamentally financial. Thoughtful observers wonder whether this is a fortunate outcome of the last period of material expansion.<sup>10</sup>

Something more subtle has happened. A church which is constantly asking for money is in no strategic position to examine or criticize the sources from which it comes. I do not say that the givers lay down conditions or the socially minded minister "soft pedals" his message. There is simply an implicit, unofficial "gentlemen's" agreement in the whole situation. A good many lines difficult to trace cross in this delicate region. Forthright-speaking ministers in churches dependent upon "large givers" have been kindly—or otherwise—spoken to; the Pittsburgh survey and report upon the steel strike had definite repercussions. Pacifism and opposition to compulsory military education in state-supported schools have introduced cross strains.

Both the Y. M. C. A.'s and Y. W. C. A.'s have had to reckon with the same situation. It really is asking a good

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<sup>10</sup> All this in the rapidly growing industrial centers is at this writing aggravated by the economic situation. Churches built in boom times are in very difficult positions. But they have no monopoly of that.

deal of money that it be willing to be both found fault with and accepted—or even sought—at the same time. It can most naturally express its disapproval of such suitors by refusing to be given. These general considerations belong to the church moralist rather than the historian. But there are evidences that a church seeking to “Christianize the social order” should not give too many hostages to the order it opposes.

## IV

Institutionalism has made the churches more human, more interesting and more socially serviceful. How far it has brought them a growth they would otherwise have failed to attain is difficult to say. They have, as we have seen, been working against confluent, contrary tides. Whatever gave them added power and appeal has been defensible. A city is a lonely place; its miles of somber streets weigh down the spirits of folk who are only cogs in its vast machinery. To such as these the church has offered friendship, release, a sense of being wanted, and happy marginal occupation. In far-flung down-town parishes the old neighborhood and family associations have disappeared, real pastoral calling has gone with them.<sup>11</sup> Unmarried adults make up in increasing numbers the constituency of such parishes. If they cannot be got together at the church, the congregation becomes a concourse of atoms. Some organic filaments must bind a church together. The church house has made this possible.

I remember a lovely room, paneled, graciously furnished, softly lighted, with a hearthstone and a fire of winter nights, where the people gathered together from a parish of over a hundred square miles, to rest a little and a visit a great deal, and to eat together presently in a room equally attractive, and

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<sup>11</sup> I have spent, if it matters, plenty of afternoons calling, when all that came of it was pressing a button in a dark apartment vestibule, waiting for the door to click—which it didn't—leaving a card in a box and going on. But those who found the card usually acknowledged the gesture.

wait about the tables for their devotional service. They thus became one family. There were among them many who otherwise would not have had much light or much beauty or any comradeship in their dining that night. Some of them may have come for the food—but they stayed for the prayers. I thought it all right once and still think it was not far from the sacramental breaking of bread in a now long-vanished room.

The accounts of the institutionalized church are thus hard to balance. There was not in 1931 the same assurance in the triumphant finality of it as in 1906. No new church would now be built without its social equipment complete as the builders could afford, nor without a far more careful survey of its actual present and probable future than was generally undertaken a quarter of a century ago; nor will the builders expect the social side to vitalize the church—*au contraire*. The increase of "home expenditure," in some denominations averaging three hundred per cent, has created a situation with which all the churches will have to reckon—especially if we are entering a period of reduced economic status.<sup>12</sup> The "missionary" giving of the churches has certainly failed to keep pace with their expenditures for themselves. It has probably suffered thereby.

On the one side the marked material development of church life in America from 1900 to 1930 has been an aspect, which it has shared with education say, of the pride, power and possession of the period. On the other side it has been the expression of the unselfish desire of the churches to be more humanely useful. One may hope that the pride and power of possession will pass, that the human usefulness of the churches will endure and be enriched.

<sup>12</sup> The debt (per adult inhabitant in the United States) upon church edifices was \$1.88 in 1906, \$2.43 in 1916 and \$5.41 in 1926. Church expenditure (per adult member in cities of 300,000 population and over) was \$8.27 in 1916 and \$19.64 in 1926. Statistics for individual churches, of course, cover a wide range. (*The United States Looks at Its Churches*, C. Luther Fry, Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York, 1930.)

## V

Every study of the social creed of the churches or the institutional activities of the churches demands a just recognition of the neutral—so to speak—region in which social work is increasingly carried on. I mean neutral because it is common to all who seek or serve the common good. There is within this region a great exchange of ideas and experiences and always, among the wise, a knowledge both humbling and saving, that no one group or department can work without the others.

Devine, in his study of *Misery and Its Causes*,<sup>13</sup> noted twenty-five "principal disabilities in five thousand dependent families in New York City." The list is too long to print here and too complex to generalize safely. Unemployment is responsible for about seventy per cent (69.16), overcrowding for forty-four per cent, widowhood for twenty-nine per cent, chronic physical disability for twenty-seven per cent, temporary physical disability twenty per cent, more than three children under fourteen eighteen per cent, natural deficiency five per cent. No one of these larger bracket percentages can be isolated. The causes cross and recross. Character defects would seem to belong to the Church, but here again educational and social environment come in. The Church has its own approaches to this deeply shadowed region, but it is not the only approach. It has its own field, but even in the most socially minded, highly organized churches the boundaries of that field are soon reached.

The *Social Work Year Book* for 1929<sup>14</sup> organized its subject matter around twelve "groups"; Families or Adult Individuals, Children, the Handicapped, Health, Mental Hygiene, Crime and Penal Conditions and the like. Under the twelve groupings there are more than two hundred specialized—some

<sup>13</sup> The Macmillan Company, 1909.

<sup>14</sup> The Russell Sage Foundation.



of them highly specialized—departments of social work, overlapping, of course. There are four hundred and fifty-five national agencies in the field of social work or its closely related fields. Protestant social work is given only three pages out of four hundred and ninety. B. Y. Landis of the Federal Council who wrote the article notes a trend toward coöperation and some surrender of activities to other agencies. Worth M. Tippy (whom he quotes) estimates that there are probably from twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand persons employed in some form of social work in local Protestant churches, in their church institutions and in their missionary and other agencies.

The slightly longer account of Catholic social work has far more factual content. Besides its religious orders of men and women engaged in charitable and educational work, the Catholic Church has gone far beyond Protestantism in maintaining its own orphanages, homes for the aged or helpless, hospitals, clinics or dispensaries, institutions for the defective, wayward or incorrigible. The tradition, organization and discipline of the Catholic Church combine to maintain this really massive social work entirely under church control. In general the Catholic Church has carried on its social work as a phase of its organic life. Protestantism tends to leave social work to specialized agencies which are a part of the general going enterprise of society.

For all that I do not think its influence should be minimized. Its churches are certainly nobly represented through their constituency in every humane enterprise. A survey of the Central Congregational Church in Providence, Rhode Island, about twenty-five years ago—the church being at that time rather conspicuously uninstitutionalized—showed it adequately represented or predominant in the support and direction of all the secular or interdenominational agencies of the city. That would have been true then, it is likely true now,

of strong Protestant churches of all communions in American cities. If the social temper thus created and kept strong works out through unecclesiastical agencies, it is none the less the contribution of the Church.

I should conclude then that the churches have had now since about 1890 a weighty social concern. They have examined the economic order and judged it by Christian tests, they have proposed changes, some of them of an immediate first-aid-to-the-injured character, others structural and far reaching. There has been, I think, a growing unanimity of all communions as to the need for such changes. The churches have created agencies to create a supporting public opinion—and even influence legislation. The educational work of the churches has been reshaped toward such ends. The general course of economic events has supplied them with thought-provoking material.

Social churches have taken on new ranges of work. To those who say, "The results have so far not been commensurate with the effort expended," the Church can at least reply, "Neither have the results been commensurate with the effort anybody else has expended. Why blame church resolutions for futility and forget presidents' messages, executive commissions, party platforms and a considerable amount of solemn-faced legislation? The sources of humanity's concern for humanity belongs to the uplands of human vision and altruism. We have certainly fed all these sources from our own high hill."

## CHAPTER V

### LIBERALISM WRESTLES WITH ITS CREEDS

IN 1890 the "liberal" was debating whether there were two Isaiahs; in 1930 the extreme "modernist" was debating whether there was a personal God. No other four decades, or forty decades either, in the history of Christian thought had seen so many and such momentous changes in fundamental religious attitudes. They have seen religious controversy begin on one sector—and that by no means the most strategic—engage one after the other the most strategic positions in the doctrinal line, and finally concentrate around the one key position whose loss would have an incalculable bearing upon the future of religion.

I do not know that anyone could write the history of theological opinion in the last forty years as a scholar would have it written. It is too near to be seen clearly, too recent to be dispassionately considered; some partisanship of position would be almost sure to color the recital. The "documents" are still hopelessly lost in the minutes of assemblies and conferences, the records of debates and the religious literature of the period. There is no outstanding authority. One cannot turn to finally formulated creeds and say, as one can say of Nicæa, Chalcedon or Constantinople, "thus and thus the Church pronounced." Who can chronicle while it is going on a process which takes place in the general mind of a time, affects philosophies as well as theologies, gives character in one way or another to the preaching of a generation, becomes audible in poetry and whispers in the failing accents of prayer? Only when the contours of it all are seen against the skyline of the past will the historian trace their peaks and valleys.

## I

I began by naming the "religious liberal" as the significant protagonist in the theological action of the last forty years. That is just, I think, but inadequate. He has made the advances—if they are advances—he has taken the shock of the changing order, he reflects most clearly the ensuing disorder and, at the present writing, confesses more frankly his difficult estate. But there are strong groups in the representative denominations which have been, apparently, unaffected by the facts of science, the conclusions of criticism, the corrosive doubts of the time.

In some denominations these constitute the majority of communicants. The "old time religion is good enough" for them; they receive it obediently, practice it devoutly. There have been regional variations. New England went through its period of controversy earlier than the rest of the country and with less bitterness since the loose organization of the Congregational churches, there predominant, localized the action which usually involved the "installation" of a recognized "liberal" such as Dr. George A. Gordon in Boston or Dr. Theodore Munger in New Haven, and prevented a general denominational engagement.

The state of New York for various reasons has been less conservative than Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Pacific Coast, where it has not given itself whole-heartedly to ingenious cults, has been rather conservative. The Interior is moderate, the South conservative and evangelical. The formal position of American Protestantism has been actually less changed than the alarums and excursions of the last forty years would seem to indicate. But something has changed for all that. The general mind of the time has reached and disquieted the mind of even sheltered churches. Youth has been trained in a changed atmosphere. The reading and thinking laymen cannot have remained ignorant of what has been in the very

air. The vague, restless, unformulated religious position of the man in the street is beyond debate.

Even the Catholic Church had a passage with "modernism" which assumed an acute character in Germany, troubled England and was not without its effects in America. The inexorable machinery of the church decided the issue and kept the heat and smoke of it mostly, though not entirely, from public view. Catholic scholarship takes account of the forces now in action but only a Catholic theologian should be asked to estimate their effect upon the thinking of the clergy or the policy of the Vatican. (Recent pronouncements of the Pope do indicate the acute concern of the church over the present social and economic situation.) Allowing for all this, what follows must still deal mostly with the changing attitudes of the liberal Protestant mind. That has registered the adjustments, made or missed, to the most revolutionary drive upon its fundamentals Christianity has ever had to face.

Leighton in his very suggestive book *Religion and the Mind of Today*,<sup>1</sup> classified his bibliography under nineteen heads. I venture to name the most important heads because they indicate accurately the wide front engaged and the ramification of religious thought. They are: Psychology and Philosophy of Religion; Comparative Religion and the History of Religion; Works on Systematic Philosophy, Especially Bearing on the Philosophy of Religion; On Mysticism; On Evolution and Natural Science; On the Problems of Evil and Freedom; Prayer; On Body and Mind; On Immortality; Origins of Christianity; The History of Christian Thought; The Ethics of Jesus; Social Ethics and Social Philosophy; Bibliographies on Hebrew, Indian, Greek and Roman, and Chinese Religion. These include about three hundred titles. If a man must know something about all this to be an intelligent Chris-

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<sup>1</sup> D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1924.

tian in the twentieth century, he will likely agree with Browning that it is very hard to be a Christian.

This bibliography makes one thing quite clear; religion is no longer confined to the clearly defined channels through which a half century ago it was believed to flow. Its banks are submerged, its current merges with the general mind-movement of the time. One finds one's way through it very much as ships come into New York Harbor, guided by white and green buoy lights which mark a winding, navigable channel in a watery waste, with a chance always of running aground in a fog. But we shall not so likely run aground as drift out to sea in this chapter unless we go on with some definite examination of what inherited Christian faith has had to reckon with in our times—and how the reckoning has come out.

## II

Take the Bible first. The general inherited mind of the Church about the Bible is a matter of common knowledge. It has supplied to the Church the source of all its theology, moral standards, authoritative faith. It furnished good Christians an armor for their warfare, a guide for their conduct, a solace in their sorrows, food for their souls. Its promises were their hope, its assurance their Viaticum in the hour and extremity of death. The devout invested it with a mystic sanctity and read or heard it read with a rapture no words could express.<sup>2</sup> They felt as Ruskin did about his Bible reading with his mother: "If a name were hard, the better the exercise in pronunciation—if a chapter were tiresome, the better lesson in patience—if loathsome, the better lesson in faith that there was some use in its being so outspoken."

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<sup>2</sup> This is not just rhetoric; it is an attempt to describe the attitude of an old Scotch-Highland woman in Detroit who had been carried into an alien world. When I read "The Word" in a pastoral call she followed the reading in a Gaelic Bible she had worn out by reading with sighs and tears and eyes which looked beyond the "bourne of time and place."

It was the inspired and inerrant word of God, the final authority about creation and human beginnings and, for the Protestant, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. There was no essential difference between the Catholic and Protestant positions save that the Catholic Church mediated the Bible to the layman and supplemented it by tradition through the Church. Protestantism offered it unmediated save by the exposition and application of the pulpit. Both made it fundamental. It had been furnished with a supporting apparatus of dates and authors which were held as sacred as the text—or more so. A man might even more safely violate one of the Ten Commandments than question the account of their proclamation.

By 1890 disturbing rumors were abroad. The work of a long generation of German scholars, whose conclusions challenged or recast the inherited conceptions of the Bible, reached America, indirectly through Scotland, or imported directly in the mental baggage of young theological students who “had studied abroad.” These young scholars found it easy to get their learning through customs but hard to find a pulpit to show it in. The best of them became the teachers of a new generation.

This cannot be made a history of “higher criticism” which was the erudite name the scholar gave his enterprise. It actually became a kind of battle-cry—“up with it,” “down with it”—an obsession, an antipathy and often rather a dusty business. A new “apparatus” of learning was built up. The learned talked casually of “J” and “E,” the Priest Code, the Redactor and the Deuteronomist—symbols, all, of the unknown authors who between them had written the first five books of the Bible, piously moralizing history with no expectation that the learned twenty-five hundred years later would be arguing about them so heatedly. Up-to-date ministers began to preach about it. “The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed.”

Dr. John Watson (Ian McClaren), who had a gift for writing the stories of Scotch life so popular during the period, pictured pathetically the distress youthful zeal was bringing to simple folk, exhorted (indirectly) zealous youth to "say a good word for Jesus Christ," and maintained that matters likely to irritate choleric or pious dispositions should be left to middle-aged clerics of a comfortable figure and an irenic temper. Theological education acknowledged the significance of the movement. The seminaries were full of men taking the Old Testament to pieces and writing books about the parts—or men who held that it could not possibly be taken apart and wrote books to prove it.

## III

The light touch in reviewing all this, which the lapse of time and an altered sense of proportion now make possible, ought not to obscure the real distress then occasioned, the significance of the conclusions reached or the far-reaching consequences of it. An historic faith is the creation of contributory time, a very slow creation. The living growth of it is wound inextricably around and through less vital supports. It is all like ivy on a wall; the wall is dead stuff, the ivy is growing life—but try to get them apart without tearing the ivy.

The Bible—nay, the inherited conceptions of the Bible—were like that to Protestant Christendom. Between them they had supported the faith of the generations, proved the existence and sovereignty of God, revealed Jesus Christ as Son of God and the world's Redeemer foretold by prophets, fore-sung by Psalmists. Twenty centuries had created this interpenetrating and interlocking system. No wonder faith was dismayed when this hallowed structure began to crumble and it saw its house left open to the pitiless sky.

But there was another side. Many of the old positions, it is now generally agreed, were without support and had



really become a weight for faith to carry rather than a support to hold it up. Devout intelligence had grown perplexed, critical intelligence alienated. The gap between old cosmogonies, legendary history, signs and wonders and the contemporary mind was too wide. Also a humanized ethical sense was distressed by the sanctification of primitive morals. Old Testament Jehovah was hard to equate with Christian theism. Robert Ingersoll a decade before had been delighting the irreverent and paining the devout by his lecture on "The Mistakes of Moses." The man who did not "believe the Bible" had to be reckoned with.

The scholar at least cut the roots of the roots of that skepticism. He re-related the sacred books of the Hebrew to their time and setting. He cleared up obscurities by finding what they were meant to mean to begin with. He traced a principle of development through ancient faith and the literary expression of it. Hebrew Jahveh became a phase of developing theistic faith, perhaps before it was purely monotheistic. Revelation was also insight; these imperfect and unedifying conceptions were the creation of men who indeed saw beyond their time but did not see enough. "Humanity," said Lyman Abbott, "is always needing an operation for spiritual cataract."

The affair was also less disturbing because it was as yet mostly confined to the Old Testament. Somewhere back in the hinterlands of learning, a region of sources, manuscripts and conjectures somewhat overlain with clouds where hardy explorers spend their lives and from which they come down from time to time with a book, a theory or a demonstration to date an epoch, the specialist was beginning to do for the New Testament what he had already done for the Old. That was to prove a far more serious issue, but as yet the man in the pew knew little or nothing about it, and the man in the pulpit was too much taken up with what was happening to Moses to

take account of vague notices of the relation of St. Paul to the mystery religions.

## IV

A decade followed which may some day be seen as the one golden age of religious liberalism. (The bright day of political liberalism was already touched with the chill of its slowly darkening afternoon.) Lyman Abbott was at that time probably the most influential liberal Protestant clergyman in America. He had the prestige of an historic pulpit, he was editor of *The Outlook*, a non-sectarian religious weekly widely read and much quoted. It was likely to be found on the "center table" flanked by the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Essays* and a novel by Edith Wharton. Its influence upon liberal religious thought in America for ten or fifteen years beginning, say, 1895, cannot easily be overestimated.

Dr. Abbott was the son of a famous school teacher and the nephew of an equally famous popular historian who wrote engagingly of Plutarch's heroes, of Romulus and Remus and later worthies. These red-bound books invested their subjects with an uncritical glamor and were much used by parents to nurture the minds of their children—which they really did.<sup>3</sup> All the Abbotts were folk of marked individuality and unusual minds. Lyman's grandfather—also Jacob, with one "t" in Abbot—was a puritan of a mellow temper and such reputation for wisdom and goodness that an untrained youth seeking ordination once told a Congregational Council that he conceived God to be some such person as Squire Abbott.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> My own father used to bring me Abbott's histories from the Xenia (Ohio) library when I very much would have preferred lighter literature. I rather thank him for it now.

<sup>4</sup> *Reminiscences*, Lyman Abbott, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1915, page 7. A most delightful and informing book. Clerical reminiscences have frequently a human quality and historical value which the general public does not often enough savor.

Dr. Abbott was graduated from New York University but he was likely more than most men self-educated. He had a mind of the first class, he was hospitable to new science, new scholarship, new ideas, being as he said in substance more interested in what was coming than in what was going. He always lived abreast of the changing years of his long life and very often ahead of them. He passed the religiously creative contributions of his period through his clear, interpretative mind. His experience at the Bar perfected him in an art of pleading which he was to exercise so conspicuously in another field. He was always the telling advocate of any cause he supported and an equally telling, though unfailingly courteous, adversary. He was never tried for heresy but he would, in such a hypothetical case, have been able to plead his own case with entire adequacy. Indeed his accusers would have been fortunate to leave the scene without wondering whether they were not really the heretics. The spectators would likely have been quite sure they were.

His short legal practice with some excursions into politics in the period just before the Civil War gave a gritty realism to his mind—he was always shrewd in his judgment of men and affairs. Then invisible tides of his mind carried him into the Christian ministry. For this vocation he trained himself, with help from his father and some experimenting in little Maine churches. The way to learn to preach, his Uncle John told him, was to preach.<sup>5</sup> He found after six weeks that sermons occurred to him oftener than he had occasion to preach them. Sixty years later he said this had been true in his life-long experience; since he never lacked occasions his mind was exceptionally fertile and open to suggestion. The Lyman Abbott of 1855 was “a slim youth, with black hair and mustache and

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<sup>5</sup> A professor in homiletics may add that the method is hard to improve upon.

the beginnings of a beard and whiskers,"<sup>6</sup> for he never had shaved. The Abbott whom this generation remembers was still slender, with a high domed forehead, little hair to mark the top of the dome and that worn long, the never shaven beard gray and patriarchal, a little aloof from unstellar humanity, a marked figure in any assembly.

Between the adventurous black beard and the wise gray one a deal of water flowed under the bridge. He had a parish in Terre Haute, Indiana, where, during the Civil War, he still further perfected the art of saying very challenging things without forfeiting the respect, even if he did not gain the assent, of those whom he opposed. It was his principle, he said, to ask courage to tell him what to do and caution to tell him how to do it.<sup>7</sup> On his way East from Terre Haute he met "the funeral cortège bearing the body of Abraham Lincoln to its resting place." He was thereafter for a period the administrative head of the American Union Commission which sought to do something in the way of education and religion for the freed-men. This commission was soon merged in a vaster current of organized effort for the education of the Negro, but it gave him contact with a tremendous problem for which he was always thereafter concerned, and made him the associate of a distinguished group of men who were doing a very hard and very necessary work under trying conditions.

He supported his family for a while by literary work, was for seventeen years the rather informal pastor of a church in Cornwall, became joint editor with Beecher of the *Christian Union*. All sorts of lines cross here for Beecher became editor of the *Christian Union* after his connection but the *Independent* was broken and Theodore Tilton had become its editor. What all this brewed belongs to past history, but Abbott with his

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, page 144.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, page 205.

genius for religious journalism began to make the *Union* what the *Outlook*, into which it afterward turned, became. He was finally called to Plymouth Church to succeed Beecher.

## V

Here the spotlight of public interest focused upon him, in an unsensational way as sensationalism was later measured. He not only maintained the prestige of an historic pulpit but added his own prestige to it and kept the spotlight following him through college and university pulpits, church assemblies, meetings of distinguished citizens and much-read books. He covered the whole front of contemporary social and religious interest—the social question, theology, the Bible, evolution. He was a master of the Hegelian technique, "This," he said of pretty much any debated subject, "is one position"; "this is the contrary position"; "and this," he went on, "is the true and reconciling position." He had a delicate touch.

He was, he said, both mystical and scientific and the mystic in him cautioned him to leave a good many things "undetermined" which the one hundred per cent mystic accepted and the one hundred per cent scientist denied.<sup>8</sup> In this he was one with the liberal religious mind of his time and it was one of the secrets of his ascendancy. If he left the meaning of "mystic" also undetermined, so did they. At any rate it made it possible for them all to combine great hospitality to modern thought with a sincere devotion to their inherited Christianity without looking, as the next period was doomed to do, into the abyss concealed by their mysticism.

Abbott was, then, an American pioneer in what his *Reminiscences* calls "a religious revolution." He did disentangle with a considerate touch faith from its old supports, for those for whom the old supports had become intolerable.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, page 456.

He popularized the conclusions of critical Old Testament scholarship with a creative emphasis upon the moral, religious and literary value of the literature thus rather radically reinterpreted.<sup>9</sup> He accepted evolution (of which more in the next chapter) and recast inherited theology to fit it into this mold. The "Evolution of Religion" and "The Theology of an Evolutionist" were weighty topics but he made them serve an almost lyric faith in an ever-present, ever-creating God. Other liberal leaders were doing much the same thing. As one turns now the pages of their books one senses anew how eager, high-spirited, confident the protagonists of new faiths and theologies were—

"Bliss was it then to be alive  
And to be young was very heaven."

## VI

About 1893 Dr. Charles A. Briggs would have quoted Wordsworth rather sadly. He was not finding it altogether bliss to be alive and a "higher critic" at the same time. The liberal ministry of the first period of Abbott's "Religious Revolution" for the most part held positions of strategic security. They belonged either to the less theologically minded denominations—and these were so organized as to make hostile ecclesiastical action difficult—or else they served churches with which it was injudicious to interfere, or else they belonged to regions the conservative majorities might distrust but could not bodily excommunicate. There are no reliable statistics of individual religious opinion but the writer has little doubt that the majority of the members of all the Protestant churches during the golden period of religious liberalism were not much affected by it. They held to old beliefs; the new puzzled or pained them. They had an instinctive (perhaps hardly rea-

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<sup>9</sup> *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1901.

soned) sense that the elements of Christian religion were tied up in one bundle; that it was going to be extremely difficult to keep the bundle and throw away the sticks.

They saw the rising tide of irreligion and secularism held back by orthodoxy and the authority of the Bible; they feared the floods which would follow a crevasse, and the men whom they believed to be actually breaking down the dikes were, in their minds, no friends of religion. Liberalism would now, I think, be more inclined to recognize the force of this position than thirty years ago. The fair-minded student of religion in the period under examination must therefore acknowledge the entirely defensible position of the conservative. The situation certainly called for tolerance—a tricky virtue likely in the give-and-take of life to put more emphasis on “take” than “give.” (Intolerance has never been the monopoly of the conservative.) It has certainly called for patience, trust in the corrective ministry of time, a slow sifting of values.

The very human contraries of these admirable virtues are always standing on the threshold of any time of welter and change anxious to get into action and nowhere more eagerly than on the thresholds of the Church. As one casts up the accounts of the period now one wonders that the whole matter went on with so little strain and break. Even the explosion of the fundamentalist controversy might not have come off without the World War.

Two heresy trials, only, of commanding magnitude came out of a movement which a few centuries earlier would have lit fires of persecution. In 1890 Dr. Charles A. Briggs was transferred to the Chair of Biblical Theology in Union Theological Seminary (New York). He was one of the acknowledged Hebrew scholars of the English-speaking world and a Presbyterian clergyman. It is customary for a professor-elect to be inducted (the word itself suggests the gravity of the function) into his chair with such pomp and ceremony as the

institution can compass and before an assembly of equally learned colleagues to whom he delivers an inaugural address. Such an address usually deals with the more erudite aspects of his specialty and is critically heard by his peers who express at its conclusion a restrained appreciation. The address is then published by the institution, sent to similar institutions and eventually rests in peace in the more remote alcoves of their libraries. Dr. Briggs's inaugural did not rest in peace.

The learned are very likely to tamp down any dynamite in their pronouncements with a good deal of insulating verbiage. Briggs took a subject about which an intelligent religious public was concerned: The Place and Source of Authority in Life, and spoke plainly. He held "divine authority to be the only authority on which man can rest in loving certainty and build with joyous confidence." "There are historically," he said, "three great fountains of divine authority—the Bible, the Church, and the Reason." He developed all this at considerable length, using both Martineau and Newman as illustrations of men who had found a basis for noble lives—the one in the "Christian consciousness," the other in an historic Church.<sup>10</sup> He managed in this one address to furnish grounds for eight charges of heresy with ten specifications. No wonder the charges in the official documents are preferred from the Second Edition of the address. No inaugural could ask better advertisement.

Specifically he was indicted for the "three foundations"; for "teaching that errors may have existed in the original text of the Holy Scripture, as it came from the author"; "that the great body of Messianic prediction has not been and cannot be fulfilled"; "that Moses did not write the Pentateuch"; "that Isaiah is not the author of half the book which bears his

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<sup>10</sup> *The Briggs Heresy Case*, John J. McCook, John C. Rankin Co., Printers, New York, 1893, pages 51 *et seq.* This extremely solid volume has everything in it which appertained to such an ecclesiastical trial in the Presbyterian Church. It has in all 373 pages.



name"; "that the processes of redemption extend to the world to come." Dr. Briggs was necessarily vague on this last point but it seemed to indicate a Protestant purgatory discreetly called "the middle state." This was more than the already severely tried conservatives could endure and they acted: first to refuse—in the General Assembly of the church—to confirm his appointment in Union. He was protected, as a professor, by the legal status of Union Seminary; the General Assembly might strongly disapprove of him in that capacity but they could not unseat him. He was, however, amenable to the courts of the church as a clergyman. His presbytery under the orders of the Assembly tried him on the ground of "unsound doctrine."

There were many reasons, which do not appear in the official records, why the Presbytery of New York found itself in a dilemma—doubts as to Moses and Isaiah were not confined to a single chair in Union Seminary. They found Briggs had not "transgressed the limits of liberty allowed under our Constitution to scholarship and opinion," recommended the brethren to study unity and peace and devote their energies "to the great and urgent work of the Church."<sup>11</sup>

It was held, however, by a tenacious group that the most urgent work of the church just then was the disposal of Professor Briggs; they carried the case to the Supreme Court of the church and secured his condemnation. He "transferred" his communion to the Episcopal Church, kept on teaching and died full of years and learning, the writer of many books and the probably unwilling occasion of an illuminating chapter in modern American church history. The condemnation of Professor Henry Preserved Smith, a scholar of the same school, naturally followed, and the courts rested from their considerable labors. The whole affair went deeper than this brief account of it suggests. It concerned primarily the

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 21 *et seq.*

attitude and policy of the Presbyterian Church,<sup>12</sup> but it showed, portentously, the gap that was beginning to open between the inherited theologies and the modern mind. It indicated how slowly the work of readjustment must proceed and what friction, pain and even rancors would attend the process.

## VII

Meanwhile Dr. Briggs in becoming an Episcopalian did not enter a communion without its own doctrinal agitations though his own experience therein was placid enough. That communion more than agreed with him about the Church as a vehicle of divine revelation and raised no questions about inerrant manuscripts "which nobody had seen." But the Rev. Algernon Crapsey found the "virgin birth" a very burning question indeed since it involved both the New Testament and all the Creeds—the citadels of Christian belief. The discerning conservative felt the structure of inherited faith to be so bedded in the Old Testament as to make any weakening of even that foundation dangerous, the liberal thought otherwise. He was glad to be delivered from defending a good deal of Old Testament ethics, and answering questions about the earlier chapters of the Book of Genesis. These shadowed backgrounds would, he thought, set out through contrast the bright certainties of New Testament faith.

And then the bright certainties of New Testament faith became less certain. The Gospels were taken apart, traced to common sources. The teachings of Jesus himself were seen to have suffered refraction. There were growing differences of opinion as to what He really taught. All this has since been

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<sup>12</sup> For a short and apparently dispassionate account of the affair, see R. E. Thompson's *History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, Christian Literature Co., New York, 1895. In a protest signed by a very representative group of Presbyterian ministers, the signers put themselves in much the same position as Briggs in regard to the infallibility of the original MSS. "which nobody had seen." Nothing happened to them.

carried much further but the strain of it had then begun to tell. The supernatural in the New Testament which had been made the keystone of the Christian structure felt the impact of the scientific temper. Old Testament miracles could be allowed, with some margin of reasonable explanation, to fade out of the picture; New Testament miracles could not.

When the specialists got well into their work the account of the virgin birth seemed to them less deeply imbedded in the Gospel narratives than most other miracles. There was also some turn in the realism of the modern mind which made it more difficult to accept than other supernatural events which might seem to ask no less faith. At any rate Crapsey challenged with his own disbelief in it a church in whose creeds and liturgies it was most central. He added to his theological heresy economic heresies as well. Perhaps his ecclesiastical superiors would have overlooked either alone—the combination was too much.

The Rev. Algernon Sidney Crapsey was, in the early nineteen hundreds, an outstanding rector of the Episcopal communion in Rochester, New York. He had a gift for straightforward and vivid speech, he was sensitized to the changing and rationalistic temper of the time and he was socially advanced. He may have lacked the balance just then needed to maintain a decorous equilibrium between inherited orthodoxies and an inquiring mind but he gained in vigor what he lacked in poise. During the winter of 1904-1905 he delivered a series of sermons on "Religion and Politics" to which the Rochester press gave wide publicity. "The history of Jesus," he said, "is the product of historic causes. Jesus had been thought of as a 'mythological being,' a 'metaphysical abstraction.' He was 'Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.'" He had conceived a society in which none "of these [social] evils should have a place, a society in which rulers should not lord it over the people." "Because of Jesus the folk-lore of the

Hebrew has become the sacred history of the Western world and the heroes of Israel the heroes of mankind."

"In the light of scientific research the Founder of Christianity no longer stands apart from the common destiny of man in life and death but He is in all things physical like as we are, born as we are born, dying as we die and in the keeping of that Divine Power, the heavenly Father-Lord, which delivers us from the womb and carries us down to the grave." "As for you, O ye unprivileged classes, who have been put off with words about Trinities and entities and incarnations and personalities, the name and terminology of the Greek dialectic, and have told that to say these things is true religion—know that true religion and undefiled before God and the Father is to visit the widow and the orphan in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world."<sup>18</sup>

As a consequence of such plain speaking Dr. Crapsey was greeted on March 3, 1906, by his Bishop, the Rt. Rev. William D. Walker, and "commanded and required to appear before the Ecclesiastical Court of the Diocese April 11th" at Batavia, New York, and there do what he could to reconcile his position with the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and the Prayer Book which, it was maintained, such sayings as his contravened. The contravention was quite evident; by the plain test of the Creeds Crapsey was convicted before he appeared. The trial itself was conducted with a long and detailed ecclesiastical formality. His advocates shone more than the defendant and there was any amount of expert legal fencing with some holy rancor. Distinguished clerics, they submitted, of the Anglican Church had held similar views and remained in good standing. Crapsey appealed from the Creeds to the Holy Scriptures. He had, he held, taught nothing not

<sup>18</sup> *Diocese Western New York. Proceeding in the Trial and Appeal of the Rev. Algernon S. Crapsey, S.T.D., Rector St. Andrews Church, Rochester, New York, upon his Presentment for Heresy*, New York, Thomas Whittaker. Also see: *Life's Adventure*, Scribner's Sons, New York, 1932, pages 243 et seq.

contained there or what may be concluded therefrom. The Rev. Elwood Worcester and the Rev. Samuel McComb defended Crapsey and from time to time the vaster issues which lay behind the trial broke through the barriers of ecclesiastical procedure.

"Nothing less is on trial," said one of Crapsey's counsel, "than the comprehensive liberty of our Church if it is to be truly holy and truly catholic." That issue belonged to time, and time takes little account of ecclesiastical courts; the court itself saw its duty plainly. Crapsey was found heretical and "suspended from exercising the functions of a minister of this Church until such time as he shall satisfy the Ecclesiastical Authority of this diocese that his beliefs and teachings conform to the doctrines of the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds as the Church has received the same." The President ordered that "as these proceedings began with Holy Communion, they should close with the Benediction."

The case was reviewed, the verdict sustained. Crapsey did not find a time when he could satisfy the ecclesiastical authority of his diocese that his beliefs and teachings conformed to the Creeds and he resigned from the ministry November 26, 1906. Eighteen years later he wrote his autobiography which, with a perhaps too confident assumption, he called *The Last of the Heretics*.<sup>14</sup> He had been, he said, influenced by the master minds of Newman, Darwin and Karl Marx (this association would have surprised any one of the three). He had been a neo-catholic, a high church clergyman, an evolutionist, a rationalist and a disciple of the higher criticism, condemned as a heretic he had exchanged the pulpit for the platform. Whether or no he was the last of the heretics, he was broken by the common destiny of the Christian Church—the reconciliation of a new mind with an old faith. Twenty

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<sup>14</sup> Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1924.

years later he would have been treated more tactfully—and perhaps left no history.

The Crapsey trial was widely followed and much commented on. The discerning outside Crapsey's communion felt the real significance of it and he had the sympathy of liberals generally. Andrew D. White thought the disregard of the pleas of Crapsey and his counsel would "inflict a blow upon the Protestant Episcopal Church from which it probably would never recover." Dr. White's study of the long warfare between science and religion should have made him a little more optimistic about the resilience of the Church. The issue led to critical studies of creeds (*e.g.* McGiffert's *The Apostles' Creed*) which in their examination of the setting and purposes of the clauses of the Creeds considerably enlarged the frontiers of a possible orthodoxy. Twenty years later the Rev. Percy Stickney Grant said much the same things as Crapsey. His Bishop called him to repentance, Grant kept on preaching. The Church had no mind for a second Crapsey trial.

### VIII

These two trials officially committed two great communions to the maintenance of their inherited faiths. Actually they brought the questions involved to the front and left them there. It was no longer possible to insulate the layman or the minister either from the currents of his time. Colleges and universities added the study of the Bible to their curricula; those who taught it had given hostages to scholarship and felt no obligation to maintain or defend anything but its conclusions. Young people home from college distressed—or puzzled—their parents by erudite references to "J" or "E" and such ministers who had no use for "J" and "E" began to preach about the godless tendencies of modern education.

But the jinn had been let out of the bottle and not even the Bench of Bishop could put it back.

## IX

Some other consequences of these trials were more grave though less evident. Very likely young men of a desirable intelligence began to look dubiously upon the ministry as a profession.<sup>15</sup> More certainly the gap between what many ministers thought and what they preached was widened, which was not good for them nor for their churches. The policy of "reservation" was strengthened. Many Protestant parsons would have read with more sympathy Isaac Williams's voluminous tract on a certain wise economy in the teaching of truth, which made the Oxford Movement so much trouble. The finer interests of religion have certainly since suffered from some want of forthright and courageous temper on the part of its official teachers.

The modern popularity of preachers who begin by recognizing the perplexity of the thoughtful and go on frankly to share tested conclusions with their seen or unseen congregation, is a witness to an unused opportunity. The intellectual distress which religion now confesses was inevitable but it could have been made less keen and less inconoclastic if the fear of the consequences of free discussion in vital regions of faith had not haunted the evangelical American pulpit for a generation; and many who have turned entirely away from institutional religion intellectually impatient would, perhaps, have been saved from throwing the baby out with the bath.

All this is more or less an aside though it is a part of the history of religion in our times; that history being far more an account of changing opinion and the consequence and entanglement of it than of ecclesiastical policy, program or ac-

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<sup>15</sup> This, I think, should not be pressed too far. Young men of a very fine intelligence have still been entering the ministry.

complished fact. Objectively the liberal communions grew less theologically minded—which is saying a good deal—and rewrote what creeds they had in much simpler and more general forms.<sup>16</sup> They experimented with new material in religious education. Their preaching took on the social note already noted, centered strongly upon the ethic of Jesus and for the rest ranged widely.

The time-spirit reached American Christianity as a whole very slowly and affected it still more slowly. It continued theologically and socially conservative. By the test of appeal to the devout and their response, conservatism was the more effective. The conservative denominations were usually more tenaciously organized (not always), they carried on with more assurance, reported more conversions than the "liberal" churches. But for all that they developed strains between the right and left wings which instead of being carried off in little tremors broke finally in the earthquake of the fundamental controversy. When one casts up the accounts of the last generation honors are quite even.

Nor has the Bible lost its throne. It is still used in Protestant worship and preaching very much as it was always used. The minister—who has a choice—may choose his lessons a little more carefully; those who have no choice follow the appointed lessons of the Christian year. No one says, "Here beginneth the Second Isaiah"—or the third either, since the most advanced scholars are no longer content with two. The Books of Moses are read serenely. Christmas repeats the stories of the Nativity. The continuities of devotion have reassembled the broken parts of the Word; you could never tell they had ever been taken apart.

Translators like Moffatt indicate original documents broadly; his introduction puts the general conclusions of scholarship

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<sup>16</sup> *E.g.* the "Kansas City Creed" of the Congregational Churches.



at the service of those who read it. These new translations have eliminated, a little, the archaic, always against the protest of the lovers of stately English and phrases long known and loved. They supply the preacher a fresh, engaging turn for a text, or give an old page a strange look through rearrangement. What has happened to the private devotional use of the Bible is beyond an historian's knowledge; it is still the best selling book in the world.

But for all these assuring sentences something is gone. Currents of thought from alien sources have caught critic and conservative and carried them into rough waters.

## CHAPTER VI

### RELIGION RECKONS WITH SCIENCE

ABOUT THE MIDDLE of the nineteenth century great events were to the fore. The archdeacon of Taunton had written Gladstone that he could no longer place any confidence in him "as representative of the University of Oxford, or as a public man." "The necessity of so writing," he added, "pains me deeply."<sup>1</sup> England was engaged in the Crimean War for no particular reason save that she had the ships, the men "and the money too." Louis Napoleon had made himself dictator of France, the King of Prussia had refused the imperial crown, and the prospect for German unity seemed poor enough. Such things as these supplied the newspapers their headlines.

America was occupied with its own affairs. The Supreme Court had decided that residence in a free state did not free a slave if he were thereafter returned to slave territory. John Brown had been heard from in Kansas, would presently be heard from in Virginia. William H. Seward had warned the nation that the "irrepressible conflict" between slave labor and free labor was hastening toward a tragic issue. The autumnal colors which brightened his native hills brought him no joy for he saw their reds and crimsons as though they had been dipped in blood.

No account was taken of certain German scholars who were disentangling Deuteronomy—the world having more serious entanglements of its own—nor of Charles Darwin working through a smother of facts to prove "The existing forms of life are the descendants by true generation of fore-existing forms."<sup>2</sup> More notice was taken of Alfred Tenny-

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, John Morley, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1903, Vol. I, page 451. By permission of The Macmillan Company.  
<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Species*, page v, A. L. Burt Company, New York.

son's recently published "In Memoriam." He, too, was wondering about nature,

" . . . considering everywhere  
Her secret meanings in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear."

He was disquieted by

"Nature red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, . . ."

He heard "from scarpèd cliff and quarried stone" the voice of cosmic callousness to the waste of life

" . . . a thousand types are gone;  
I care for nothing, all shall go." \*

He was led through his brooding over a great sorrow to write a sequence of poems through whose cantos the travail of faith during the period upon whose threshold he stood was prophetically woven. "In Memoriam" has dated two epochs; one when preachers began to quote it; the other when they stopped.

Which is a way of saying that the three forces destined profoundly to affect the religious mind were then rising above a stormy horizon: a revolutionary interpretation of the Bible, evolution and a new kind of religious doubt which a poet's sensitive spirit and penetrating mind were the first to feel and voice. They went on for a while quite independently. Darwin was working with countless little things questioning them tirelessly, seeking the law and method of their inheritances and variations. Biblical scholars were working with Hebrew manuscripts, asking them questions also about their setting and purposes, their inheritance and variations. There seemed then no possible

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\* For a significant reference to the relation between *In Memoriam* and *Origin of Species*, see *Fifty Years of Darwinism*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1909, pages 14 and 15.

convergence of these two lonely lines in an assault upon the citadels of Christian faith. Only the poet had the vision to anticipate what would happen when they met. And scientist, theologian and poet were all being swept along by the same invisible tides.

## I

What happened to the religious mind, and through that mind to the churches through changed conceptions of the Bible, has been somewhat considered. It would have been disturbing under any circumstances but its area of disturbance would have been much limited if science had not supplied its fascinating alternatives for the creation accounts of Genesis and the supernatural government of the world, documented them with tireless labor and created, by its disciplines and its triumphs, the scientific mind; nothing would have happened but intellectual confusion. The old, old questions "Whence?" and "Whither?" and "Why?" would still have remained unanswered, insistently interrogative between two worlds

"One dead, the other powerless to be born."<sup>4</sup>

But the time-spirit is a master strategist. He never withdraws his battle-worn divisions from any front till he is ready to send in a new army of occupation, though there is likely to be a deal of confusion in his maneuvers. No need to say here that modern thought has supplied its own book of Genesis, offered its own vast alternatives to ancient and holy things which had already begun to fade as a dream, given positive content to new ways of thinking about man and the universe. It is the confluence of all these forces which has so profoundly affected religion. It is the seeming completeness of the alterna-

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<sup>4</sup> If the reader should just here protest that these interrogation marks are now more than ever "rampant" and the new world coming to birth through much travail leaves us more puzzled than ever, I think he would be right.

tives offered which have made possible for the first time in Western history a unified non-religious system of thought and conduct.

"Evolution" was the spear-point the time-spirit drove home against the old order. We see it now as anything but a spear-point; rather as a ruling idea which has rewritten science and supplied the mold in which the Western mind has been recast. It has veined the cosmos with unity and defied any writer to put it in a paragraph or a shelf of books either. It insisted upon being reckoned with directly its implications became evident. In one region or another thought has been reckoning with it almost three-quarters of a century. The reactions of the modern Christian mind toward it have passed through three phases.

There was first and generally a pained, indignant protest; it contradicted Genesis and could not be true. An ecclesiastical Darwinist was almost as rare as a white blackbird. The shame of a simian ancestry distressed bishops, one of whom asked Thomas Huxley whether he claimed descent from a monkey through his grandfather or his grandmother. The bishop would better have not inquired. "A man," Huxley replied, "need take no shame from having an ape for a grandfather but might well be ashamed of an ancestor who used his great gifts to obscure the truth—especially when he had no real acquaintance with it."<sup>5</sup> This disposed of the bishop for the time being; it did not dispose of the monkey cliché. William Jennings Bryan found it useful and it can still, in some quarters, be counted upon for a round of applause.

This period of joyous conflict—Huxley at least enjoyed it—presently merged into a less belligerent and more open-minded period. A growing number of church leaders recog-

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<sup>5</sup> For a full account of this historic retort, see *Life and Letters of Thomas H. Huxley*, Leonard Huxley, D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1900, Vol. I, pages 193 *et seq.*

nized that evolution had come to stay and was bound to make a great difference in religious belief; they felt also that it would be made the friend and not the foe of religion. Their endeavor to make it just that strongly colored the liberal religious thinking through the larger part of the period here considered. It seemed to fall in—one must use a theological term here—with the doctrine of an “immanent God,” a God who was in the processes and powers of nature, not “an absentee God sitting outside the universe and watching it go.” It was not hard to find in the language of devotion and even in the ancient creeds phrases hospitable to this interpretation. And it had besides a strong appeal to the devout imagination.

Something older than Christianity stirred in answer to it; our sense of kinship with nature, an awe which neither knowledge nor sophistication can ever quite banish at the mystery of the world and its processes. Religion had burgeoned out of that to begin with. It was easy once more to soften and brighten theology with the poetry and wonder of it. We were, said Lyman Abbott, like earth-bound lily bulbs with something germinal at the heart of us meant for air and sunshine; the task of life was to rise above our earthiness to the native regions of the soul.<sup>6</sup>

The poets became very useful—Wordsworth, of course, through his rich feeling for nature and mystic pantheism. (Aldous Huxley has lately inquired what Wordsworth would have said about nature if he had lived in the tropics, forgetting that India furnished the earliest forms of just such religious poetry.) Tennyson supplied the preacher telling quotations—

“ . . . arise and fly  
The reeling faun, the sensual feast;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.”

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<sup>6</sup>The author remembers the substance of such a sermon in the *Christian Union*.

Sin thus became our "brute inheritance"—an assumption which the brute might, with some justification, have protested. The appeal to "let the ape and tiger die" ended a good many sermons ushering in the twentieth century. We were, it was widely felt, about to actually get it done and with no great trouble since evolution was doing it automatically. Browning, though no great help to the evolutionist, was invaluable to the optimist, whose bright confidences had not yet been dimmed by the second law of thermodynamics.

## II

The reconciliation of evolution and theology occupied many brilliant and speculative minds. Dr. Lyman Abbott is as representative as any.<sup>7</sup> He began with a definition of religion then much quoted: "Religion is the life of God in the soul of man." Evolution, he defined, with John Fiske, as "God's way of doing things." Theology "is the science of religion." The "resident forces" of the evolutionist and the "divine immanence" of the theologian are different forms of the same truth, though the "divine spirit which is manifested in all phenomena is more than the sum of all phenomena."

The rest goes on almost epigrammatically. Man's method is the method of manufacture; God's method is the method of growth. It began "in misty matter hung nebulous in the universe" set in motion "by that infinite and eternal energy which is an infinite and eternal mystery, and which I believe is God." It proceeded through higher and higher forms "until at last the world came to be what it is today." Sin is an inevitable aspect of growth—a surrender to the "brute inheritance" considerably intensified because man's higher powers are made the instruments of his animalism.

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<sup>7</sup> *An Evolutionist's Theology*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1897, *passim*.

Revelation is the human side "of an increasing capacity to receive religious truth" and therefore an increasing understanding of it. "Inspiration is in-breathing; revelation is unveiling." The Bible is the record of the joint action of these two; it is a progressive revelation; its errors are due to deficient capacities to receive and understand religious truth. Jesus Christ crowns and completes revelation "that we might see how God would live on the earth." True redemption is spiritual evolution. It disentangles the higher from the lower, it is the development of the whole man for whom Christ is the ideal example.

Sacrifice is the law of life, suffering for others the consummate fact and force of human life. The Cross is the timeless symbol of the eternal love of the Father bound by the same law by which his children are bound. Life is paid for by life. Atonement is "at-one-ment"; redemption the outcome of a threefold struggle in which the soul acquires virtue by its conflict with temptation, is supported by the sharing, "suffering love of Another," and lastly a struggle in the Redeeming Spirit itself. The doctrine of evolution did not seem to Dr. Abbott "inconsistent with the belief that at certain epochs in the world's history, and for certain special moral ends, there occurred unusual events which awakened attention and have served as signs of a superhuman power wrought in works either of judgment or mercy; although almost uniformly the latter."

Personal immortality gives meaning to an evolution, which without it would be meaningless. All this is quoted because in one form or another it supplied liberal preaching a doctrinal basis for a generation. It merged easily with the "social gospel." Rauschenbusch's *Theology for the Social Gospel* and Abbott's *Theology of an Evolutionist* have central and strategic regions in common. Between them they made



"sacrifice" and "service" key-words. The Christian social order became the

" . . . one far-off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves."

Speculatively minded scientists or popular interpreters of science made their own sympathetic contributions. John Fiske interpreted Herbert Spencer to a world which felt that there must be something of cosmic significance in fifteen massive volumes of *Synthetic Philosophy* but did not quite know what, being uncertain about "*Synthetic Philosophy*" to begin with and much confused by that philosopher's polysyllabic style. Fiske did his work admirably and added a grave music of his own. His little books on *The Destiny of Man* and the *Idea of God* were widely read and quoted. They were apt to be flanked by Drummond's *The Greatest Thing in the World* and possibly by a worn copy of *Sartor Resartus*, though Carlyle's shadow was receding.

Matthew Arnold discovered in the universe at about the same time "a Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." It was easy to identify Spencer's "Eternal and infinite energy" with that "Power not ourselves," and so root Christian theism in the hidden heart of the cosmic order. I remember a noble use Washington Gladden once made of just this argument. But, he said, no such impersonal phrases shall content us, we shall take them all and lift them into a nobler region in our confession and adoration—

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;  
Heaven and Earth are full of the majesty of Thy Glory."

The evolutionist could still sing the *Te Deum*.

Fiske and Henry Drummond transmuted Darwin's struggle for survival into the struggle for the lives of others, found a place for love again in the cosmic process. Benjamin Kidd

supported them with characteristic sociological studies which proved the strong naturally kind and (after a time and under some pressure) quite willing to surrender their advantage for the good of the less privileged. Edward Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward*.

Some of this antedates the period examined but it takes time for ruling ideas to reach the pulpit and longer to reach the pew. Liberal American preaching and religious teaching were given content and direction by such ruling ideas as these until the World War. They very greatly affected the idealism of the intelligent middle class in America, who did some transmuting of their own and changed what their churches (not all of them) so glowingly taught into a sanguine expectation of all desirable things without any very close attention to detail.

All this deserves more attention than it has received from students of American civilization. Something more than the "frontier" has supplied the glamor of our frontierless dreams. The "progressives" whom Theodore Roosevelt let out into the wilderness singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" and destined for the Promised Land learned their marching song in church. There, too, they had been confirmed in their belief that the dawn of the golden age awaited only a herald and proper legislation. They had heard their church bells—

"Ring out the thousand wars of old  
Ring in the thousand years of peace."

Here is surely one key to the tidal-wave response which the political and social idealism of the first decade and a half of the new century received. It is also a key to the devastating disillusionment which followed the eclipse of all these bright dreams.

### III

The religious conservative watched all this unhappily. He had for the time nothing half so glowing to oppose to it;

he had only his loyalty to his inherited faith, his "old-time religion," his probable numerical preponderance, the argument that conservatism saved more souls—which it very likely did statistically—and the very ancient appeal of individual salvation. He yielded his position slowly—if at all. If the very "fundamental" Bryan had not been the outstanding and life-long advocate of immediately redemptive legislation, one might hold the austere theology of the conservative to have been a corrective to the utopianism of the time. There were many cross-currents so as to make generalizations unsafe. At any rate the decade following 1914 supplied a strong case to those who believed in the depravity of human nature and the incurable wrongness of the world.

Using the war for a base-line, both religious liberalism and conservatism then entered a third phase. Liberalism grew more perplexed; conservatism more militant. The liberals—they were not yet modernists—of Abbott's generation retained a sound deposit of orthodoxy. They could not escape—did not seek to escape—what was part of the texture of their souls; ("complexes" had not then supplanted souls.) They seem<sup>8</sup> to have had no anticipation that within a short generation extreme liberal religion would be fighting with its back against the wall for a God who was not a philosophic abstraction. Prayer had its difficulties but it was not yet a problem or a useful exercise in autosuggestion. Abbott confessed himself half a mystic and under that cover drew off from clear-cut distinctions in very vital regions. He even added to the interest of theological controversy by maintaining that if one said a creed in which he did not believe he was insincere; if he sang it, he was only using the creed liturgically and need not concern himself with its intellectual content.

On the whole the ten or fifteen years before the war were,

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<sup>8</sup> The writer knew many of them personally.

controversially, a kind of Truce of God. The older men on both sides were beginning to put off their armor, the younger men were much taken up with the "institutional church." The churches had begun also to overhaul their ecclesiastical machinery. Efficiency and economy were the slogans of the time, the churches adopted them wholeheartedly and found abundant room for their application; they had, they thought, too many "Boards" and too many secretaries. The more loosely organized denominations moved toward centralization. Commissions met and considered and reported. This continued until after the war. The result was usually a consolidation into new departments of their variously named organizations for denominational work and a renaming of their secretaries, after which things went on much as before.

The independent churches developed a new type of executive churchman (new for them) to administer their centralized organizations. The crusading temper of the period brought out leaders who had a marked gift for starting enterprises whose outcome was not always commensurate with the effort put in them. Churches and the Young Men's Christian Association worked together during this period probably more intimately than before or since. The Association was then strongly under the direction of about the same type of leadership, and the most distinguished of these leaders supplied an ideal for minister and secretary alike. Practical American Christianity became clean-shaven, square-jawed, grave, weighted with a sense of world-responsibility and weighing its words. And it revered the "American business man" next to God.

The growing enterprises of the churches needed a great deal of money and they developed an effective technique for getting it. The churches were apportioned their shares in denominational enterprises. They formed and submitted "budgets"; "systematic giving" became another slogan. Multi-

colored envelopes for the payment of this or that pledge<sup>9</sup> supplanted "the Rainbow Bible" in the preacher's study, since getting the church apportionment paid was just then more important than documenting the Old Testament. The revenues of the churches have thus much increased and the bases of church support broadened. But giving was certainly mechanized.

## IV

During this period of excessive action there was a significant revival of interest in mysticism. It was probably true then, as it had been two thousand years before, "that many [were] the wand-bearers; few the mystics." The word itself up to 1900 had little circulation. There was no available literature upon the subject a preacher could read without a headache. William James changed all that with his *Varieties of Religious Experience*; Evelyn Underhill, Baron Von Hügel and Rufus Jones continued and enlarged the interest in mysticism in their histories of it and their interpretations of its meaning; which fell in with the general interest in psychology. They could not share entirely with their readers their own wealth of inner experience, they could and did awaken interest in a great and little-understood phase of religion.

Underhill especially suggested an illuminating key—possibly overstressed—to puzzling New Testament narrations. Together they furnish material which got abundantly written into books and inspired sermons likely to have left pulpit and pews in a fascinating fog. The popular response to this line was not marked, the United States being then anything but mystic, and those who labored with it not always sure of what they were talking about. Religious book lists are always very significant since their editors have a flair for what devout book-buyers are thinking about, or can be brought to think about.

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<sup>9</sup> There are four kinds of envelopes in a box I have just been examining, each one dated, labeled, helpfully tinted.

Books on mysticism began to disappear from their lists after the war, though English publishers still announce them. The interest was significant for all that and, maybe, prophetic. Essential religion was increasingly hard pressed from two sides: by the mechanics of the churches on one side, by intellectual perplexities on the other.

Mysticism was an attempted return to immediate religious experience. Conversion, in the period of revivalism, had furnished a religious experience of which the saved were more sure than anything else in the world. They could date their second birth as definitely as their first.<sup>10</sup> A religion thus validated had sure supports, it could survive the loss of pretty much everything save the encouragement of other people who had like experiences. Methodism at one time would have felt the loss of its bishops less vitally than the loss of its class meetings.

Very likely at no time since the beginning of the eighteenth century had evangelical Protestantism been so inwardly arid as it was in the beginning of the twentieth century. Young people came into the communion of their churches through "pastor's classes": a little church history, a little Christian ethics and a good deal of "what are you going to do with your life?" Older people "joined the church" through appeals to support "an institution without which society would go to pieces." Real estate values, it was said, were higher in church districts, and "how would you like to live in a town without a church?"

It is easy to over-exaggerate this trend. The finer, quieter aspects of religion were, as always, in existence and action. The supporting church constituencies had an unguessed number of the sincere and devout. But the trend was dominant. The recession of the religion of experience carried

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<sup>10</sup> I have heard these testimonies: "I was born again on January, 1800 and—; on Thursday at nine o'clock in the evening."

"prayer meetings" along with it. Though the change was less marked in some regions and denominations, all the churches mourned the ebbing tide and with it the habit of public lay-prayer began to fail. The drama of the soul which had so long supplied "testimonies," confessions, trembling words of hope and appeal for help—"Pray for me that I may prove faithful"—grew remote and dim; the younger generation had very little to say about their souls or were too tongue-tied to say it. They were between two worlds; confessional religion was moribund, psychoanalysis was not yet born.

The faculty of thoughtfully discussing high themes bearing upon the fine conduct of personal life and the methods of religion began to be lost. How could one testify to an "experience" he had never experienced? Church people were thinking in other regions, practical, half secular. They began to make a liturgical exercise of the prayer meeting, or else an open forum. This transient concern for mysticism—for a first-hand certainty of God no confusion could obscure and needing neither book nor priest—was soon lost, as though here and there a few had "tuned in" on a spiritual station remote from the clamor of the time and finding the message confused and reception bad had tuned out again, but it was symptomatic of a great, unsatisfied need. The churches may turn to that station again and the next time listen longer and more patiently.

## V

Mysticism was a sideline, it left its mark upon religious thinking, and some deposit in the religious spirit. It had no power to deflect the affair of religion with science. After the war that affair entered its third and contemporaneous phase. The dislocation of the war, the relation of American religion thereto and its subsequent reactions must have a chapter to themselves. Its immediate effect upon Christian faith was

disastrous, and the intellectual confusion of this third period reflects the disaster. But there would have been confusion enough without the war. The lyric evolutionary faith of Fiske, Abbott, Drummond was in the way of being challenged by something vaster, more inexorable than the sanguinary front of allied nations. It was in the way of being challenged by the drive of realistic thought upon its central position.

New words appeared to date an epoch; "modernist" and "fundamentalist" supplanted "liberal" and "conservative." Political liberalism, the temper of Gladstone and Morley, of Roosevelt at his best and Wilson, before the war caught and broke him, had been carried out to whatever sea finally receives the currents of human interest and action, and the tides in which it finally lost itself had been incarnadine with the blood of the youth who had been nourished in its traditions. Those who followed them belonged to another world; they were modern, the others were timeless.

The issues of 1900 no longer concerned the modern-minded young minister. He accepted as a matter of course the results of Biblical criticism. The Bible he knew was the sacred literature of the most religiously gifted branch of the Semitic race, the creation of sequent centuries, reflecting the changing minds of changing times. All this did not disturb him, he was seeking bases for his faiths in another region and facing a new range of doubts. He was not much concerned about the supernatural, was trained in comparative religion, spoke learnedly of racial and environmental influences. He was vitally interested in the social applications of Christianity (he had very likely heard his call from that region) and, having the war to clarify his vision, began to think of Christianity in international terms. He was not greatly concerned about saving the "heathen"; he was searchingly concerned about a Christianity the "heathen" could respect. He was not, I think,



very speculatively minded; he was a modern beginning to be a realist, and just on that threshold science met him with a very disturbing realism.

The God-faith of the devout late-Victorian had been lyric and cloud-frontiered; Abbott's favorite illustration was a rose: man made a rose of wax paper, God unfolded it through growth into living beauty and fragrance. But Abbott had come to his rose by way of God. Modern botany—if it were theologically minded—sought God by the way of the rose, and did not find it so simple. The faith of the late-Victorian evolutionists had been this-earth centered. Man was, they held, the consummation of the evolutionary process and our planet, particularly the Western half of its Northern Hemisphere, the chosen field of divine action.<sup>11</sup>

Evolution was for them only "the way God works." Prayer was still possible, though subject in the physical world to natural law; God was still on His throne though clouds and darkness surrounded it. There was a strange insensitiveness to all the implications of science, far too hasty proclamations of victory. They believed themselves to have met and overcome and made contributory to their faith the grand army of scientific inquiry. They had, as the event proved, only engaged the advance lines of the realistic modern mind. Behind the misty frontiers along which religious faith marched with science there was the stern mobilizing of forces by whose impact the whole inherited form of religion itself was to be challenged.

The liberal felt the drive first; he was the furthest out. Protestantism felt it more acutely, because it was far more loosely organized than Catholicism. But there was no sector, to continue this useful and somewhat worn figure, of historic Christianity which was not involved, and, for all the vulner-

<sup>11</sup> Astronomers are still inclined to think the chances of other planets in the universe fit for the habitation of *homo erectus* unexpectedly small.

ability of the Protestant liberal position, one may gravely doubt whether any part of the line will hold for an indefinite future if free inquiry cannot maintain religious faith.

## VI

Astronomy supplied the most disturbing force in two words—"light-years." Belief in immortality has probably been more perplexed by the disappearance of a "place" where the discarnate may go than by the more subtle difficulty of conceiving any existence at all without the body. Sir Oliver Lodge may be satisfied with an "etheric body" in the circumambient ether. Grieving affection wants something more localized than that. Religion has always greatly depended upon the imagination to support—with some contribution, however shadowy, from sense experience itself—a range of realities with which sense experience has nothing to do. Faith in immortality has always been made real through imagination of regions bright with eternal felicity where shades who cast no shadow might carry on their once incarnate ways.

A sophisticated faith can stop wondering what God looks like; it has been far more dependent than it cared to confess upon some vague imagination of a place where He is.<sup>12</sup> "Light-years" brought home to the devout imagination for the first time all the implications of cosmic space. They staggered the imagination. Faith was lost in the dark void of a cosmic order in which the light itself grows old in its journey from star to star. The chill of interstellar space touched prayer and it grew dumb and cold. Galileo pulled down the earth from its throne in the solar system and a prescient Church protested. But the solar system remained and we had grown used to the diminished estate of our planet.

Now the solar system itself was dethroned and man's

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<sup>12</sup> Einstein's "finite universe" may have been so acceptable to speculative theologians because it supplied imagination a "beyond," for God to be in.

elect estate seemed to go with it. He was only the fugitive inhabitant of an inconsequential satellite in a third rate solar system somewhere in the marginal region of the universe. He was looking at rather near stars (measured by the scale of "light-year" space) by a light which left its source while the region from which he looked and wondered was still under the ice-sheet. He struggled valiantly with words he had always used—infinite and eternal—but now that the mathematician had plotted their awesome sweep they staggered him. One cannot pray to a table of logarithms.

Actually nothing had much changed. The distance to the next gas station was still more important to the wayfaring motorist than the distance to Betelgeuse. The commerce of life has always been carried on with concrete interests and not abstract ideas. One's own hopes, fears, affections and satisfactions are always the most significant realities and they are little affected by the nebulae in Orion. But religion had for all that to reckon with a new kind of imagination,<sup>18</sup> and the subsequent religious adjustments of the "modernist" were more largely controlled by this than his arguments, rationalizations and the like have frankly confessed.

The universe had not exactly got too big for God but it did suggest an order with little or no concern for anything so ephemeral as our humanity. It became very difficult to fill the dark spaces between the stars with a sovereign personality. Nothing seemed to be left but the sweep of impersonal, inexorable processes. The human spirit has fashioned its prayers out of its loneliness, its persuasion of being something other than earth-dust or star-dust. "Religion," says Whitehead, "is what we do with our solitariness." It had always before been able to make religion out of its loneliness but this light-

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<sup>18</sup>I do not mean to say that religion is a creation of the imagination. I am using the word in a fixed dictionary sense. It is true that a changed type of imagination demands a changed conception of religion—e.g. the difference between Homer and Plato.

year measured space broke the courage of the far-seeing and the sensitive.

A radical psychology and bio-chemistry completed what the light-years began. Bio-chemistry reduced all life to a series of chemical reactions, probably light-stimulated and of an increasing complexity in the higher orders of life. Behavioristic psychology carried these reactions into consciousness itself and left us nothing but robots haunted—if a robot can be haunted—by the delusion with which the cosmos mocked our humanity; that we were free spirits and sons of God. In this interlocking system the faith which surrendered to it reached its nadir.

## VII

Faith could not remain in an eclipse like that. It began to look about for deliverance and discovered an unexpected ally in the scientist himself. He found it quite as difficult as did the theologian to adjust his old imagination to his new universe; rather more difficult on the whole without a good deal of help from the philosopher and a little from religion. He found himself as he went on involved in deepening mysteries. Religion had begun just there, in humanity's sense of the mystery of itself and its environment; apparently science was ending just where religion began. Science and religion had thus a common region in which to work. The result has been a long decade of highly technical thinking on the part of the pure scientist, a very great deal of speculative thinking on the part of philosophic scientists who want to know what it all means, and the endeavor of open-minded religionists to maintain in so shaken a world the everlasting reality of religion. The most clear-visioned of them accepted as difficult but highly promising material to be subdued to spiritual ends and values, what tested knowledge we have of ourselves and our universe and began therefrom to rebuild their house of faith.

It has proved a demanding task whose history certainly cannot be written until it is finished. It must be judged by the issue. The most important work has been done in pretty remote regions. Newspapers could hardly be expected to headline a philosophic examination of the nature of "reality"<sup>14</sup>—and this has proved to be the key question. If nothing is "real" save the dust to which all tangible form and matter are finally reduced, nothing sovereign save the laws which control its procession through countless metamorphoses to that appointed end then, though the procession is both fascinating and flaunting, religion becomes only the wishful dreaming of the pitiful children of the dust, and the Second Law of Thermodynamics rules the universe. Religion has never believed that dust is the only reality; it still refuses to believe it and science gravely doubts it.

I do not know how to document this last phase of inquiring religious thought. It would have to be traced through all sorts and conditions of works. Those alert and resourceful registers of religious thinking, the editors of religious books on the staffs of representative publishing houses, have kept their presses hot with publications dealing with one aspect or another of the status of religion. They have capitalized provocative titles and encouraged controversy in the interests of truth and increased sales. A sufficiency of writers have supplied more than a sufficiency of manuscripts. The unprecedented number of religious works<sup>15</sup> published from 1920 to 1930 reflects the general interest in religion and the modern technique of making religious books interesting. Something also must be credited to the modern technique of advertising.

<sup>14</sup> See *Reality*—Canon Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1927. No single work of the period deals more directly with the fundamental question in issue. It is one of the few "ruling idea" books published in the decade from 1920 to 1930.

<sup>15</sup> One wise editor of religious works wisely qualified the publications of his own distinguished department. There were, he said, plenty of books about religion being published but no religious books.

All the outstanding books of the period in this department have dealt with some phase of readjustment. It would be a specialist's task to quote them representatively. Such monthly periodicals as *The Atlantic*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's* have given generous space to brightly written articles bearing directly or indirectly upon the religious situation. The religious press, denominational or independent, has reflected the situation. Preaching, of course, has been deeply colored by it. It is quite as difficult to summarize as to document. We are too near to get perspectives, too concerned for detachment. Also the lines cross and recross.

Psychology has been as challenging as science, perhaps more so; historians have rewritten the genesis of Christianity; the old certainties have been shattered. Any estimate of the cumulative result of all this belongs naturally to some final chapter. The scientists of the last decade have, on the whole, been kinder to religion than their more dogmatic predecessors. They have been humbled by the splendor of their accomplishments, awed by the dizzy reaches of space and time with which they dealt. The mechanical conception of the universe which they inherited has now, it is held, been discredited; the universe seems to insist upon being something more than matter and space. They recognize with caution the possibility of an ultimate reality which could as well be called spiritual as physical. They face again—

“The sense of something still more deeply interfused.”

If the philosopher and theologian can, between them, do anything more with it the scientist is willing to let them try!<sup>16</sup> It is still a long way from his ultimate reality to religion's God

<sup>16</sup> This may represent fairly enough the general attitude of spectacular scientists. It goes further than the more conservative. It does not go so far as Eddington, Whitehead, Jeans and Haldane from whom, as scientists, religion has received, in the last ten years, most help and comfort. A little group book, *Science and Religion*—Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1931.

but he has taken down the sign "No thoroughfare." For the contemporaneous mind religion has played second fiddle to science during all this period, but religious thinking has been toughened and enriched—as well as challenged by the dominance of science. The scientists have furnished their religious contemporaries new mysteries to ponder over in their universe which is both limited and unlimited; their space-time, their relativity, their reduction of matter to force, their distillation of force into always more imponderable and universal forms. The theologian could hardly be expected to understand it all but he has handled these new phrases valiantly—a David, occasionally, in Saul's armor—and very likely in ways the scientist would not entirely approve.<sup>17</sup> The situation has been trying, however, and any support from the seats of the mighty grateful.

## VIII

The conclusion, as far as it can now be tentatively stated, is that while the last phase of the long engagement of religion with science has been more favorable to religion than the period just preceding, modern-minded religious thinkers have felt the difficulties of their position far more keenly than the liber-

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will serve the general reader's purpose as well as something much more technical. The most cautious of the scientific contributors recognize man's need for religion. Malinowski says as much though confessing himself an agnostic, which he calls, "A tragic and shattering frame of mind." Sir Arthur Thompson recognizes a division of labor: "Science and religion are two of the noblest expressions of the evolving spirit of man." Haldane believes the "only ultimate reality is the spiritual or personal reality which we denote by the existence of God." Eddington doubts whether physical science can answer the "plain man's" question about a God, "to whom [he] may turn with devotion and trust" and refers him to religious experience. He and Haldane think "mind" permissible as a designation of ultimate reality. Here again the circle comes full round. Hindu thinkers said as much as that twenty-six hundred years ago. Perhaps the theologian gets as much comfort from the scientist's confession that "mechanical determinism" has broken down as anything else—

"Vague words: but ah, how hard to form  
In matter, moulded forms of speech—"

<sup>17</sup> It is a little difficult, for example, to see what difference it makes to religion whether the universe is finite or infinite, or the exact bearing of the incalculable actions of the electrons of an atom upon the freedom of the will.

als of, say, 1900. The whole process has focused with dramatic suddenness upon the reality of that kind of God who has been hitherto both foundation and keystone of the structure of Christian faith. Everything else in the field of religious controversy has been a detail, as though men on shipboard should argue about the authors of their charts or some precedence of command while the tides which carried their craft were withdrawn from beneath them.

It is easy, of course, to exaggerate the extent of fundamental religious doubt during this last period. The "fundamentalist" controversy proved that the reconciliation between evolution and Christian faith which the liberal thought accomplished was (and is) still far from a *fait accompli*. The really more searching questions have reached the general church membership only as the ground swell of a storm far out at sea disturbs the craft in sheltered harbors, though I should think the situation partly responsible for the growing secularization of life which organized religion has had to face.

There are assuring signs along the horizon, the signs of something more creative than the mere reconciliation of science and religion. The travail of the human mind and spirit has never been in vain, the issue of this present travail may well be a new assurance of what we have no other name for than Spirit as the sovereign-real. Out of this, religion will re-cast its creeds, and,

". . . mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,  
But vaster . . ."



## CHAPTER VII

### "WE ARE NOT DIVIDED"

THE NUMBER OF CHURCHES of all American denominations (including Catholics) increased 7.6 per cent between 1906 and 1916; it increased only 1.7 per cent between 1916 and 1926. Adult church members—or communicants—increased 18.6 per cent between 1906 and 1916; 17.3 per cent between 1916 and 1926. The adult population of the United States increased 39.5 per cent during these twenty years, church membership (adult) increased 39.1 per cent.<sup>1</sup> These dusty figures show church membership keeping up (not quite) with population growth. They show the organization of new churches falling behind population growth, and they are saved from dustiness by one arresting fact: They register for the churches the end of the long period of denominational multiplication and expansion in America. Denominational "patterns" were set, the frontier was gone, a new epoch had dawned.

From about 1876 (a convenient date) to 1900 the churches had written their heady chapter in the American epic. They all had by that time efficiently organized "Home Missionary" or "Church Extension" societies. The "East" supported these agencies generously and asked in return only glowing reports of progress. The secretaries of promotion were driving and resourceful, living lives of hardship, romance and consecration. The organizations behind them were high-g geared, their appeal to their supporting constituency as old as Hebrew Haggai: "Is it time for ye to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" Neither Christian devotion nor American patriotism could deny an appeal like that. Gifts

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<sup>1</sup> *The United States Looks at Its Churches*, C. Luther Fry, Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York, 1930. An admirable digest of governmental censuses of religious bodies.

## "WE ARE NOT DIVIDED"

and legacies poured into denominational treasuries and they used them all for the glory of God, the future of the Republic and their own numerical increase.

A benevolent federal government shared its imperial domain with the builders of transcontinental railroads and one apostolically minded beneficiary pledged an alert church society "land sufficient for a meeting house and parsonage in every city and town along their extended route and in some cases they obtained whole blocks."<sup>2</sup> Other communions, though less favored by "empire builders," were quite as effective in organizing and building churches. Chaplain C. C. McCabe, famous among the Methodists, wired Colonel Robert Ingersoll, who had just said that the churches were dying out all over the land: "All hail the power of Jesus' name we are building more than one Methodist Church for every day in the week, and propose to make it two a day!"<sup>3</sup> Triumphant Methodism caught the refrain and swept west, singing as it went

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
We're building two a day."

The statistics of other denominations less aggressive or less suited to the temper and status of the last frontier were not quite so arresting nor could they find another hymn so well adapted for a slogan but they all built. The competitions and duplications of an excessively divided Protestantism went West with the tide of population. Why not? The future was as limitless as the land. There was room enough for everybody and every kind of religion. One has no right now to ask of church builders a foresight no one else then possessed. And no one had then the right or the mind to forbid the exercise

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<sup>2</sup> *The Story of Religions in America*, William Warren Sweet, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1930, page 483. This book is an invaluable account of American religion.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 484.

of that "rugged individualism" which has made America what it is. They sang "All hail the power of Jesus' name" and built churches.

They built also sectarian academies and colleges, anticipations of Harvard, Yale and Princeton (with denominational adaptations), dim sources of *lux et veritas* in towns whose streets ended in prairies. These were in the best aspects of the American tradition; if they lived they brought the humanities to the banks of the Missouri and offered the youth of a raw, new land a little beauty, a laborious discipline and boundless hope. If they presently starved for the want of money, they did no more than join the other ghosts of a region which lived so vividly in the future that no ghosts of past failures could haunt its nights. It was epic building, as James Truslow Adams has just been telling us. They built on copper mines and silver mines and the contagious confidence of the real estate promoter, the advertisements of railroads selling their free-gift land and the posters of steamship lines in the heart of Europe proclaiming America the Promised Land. They built on the sawdust piles of Michigan lumber camps, they built on the strong soil of unplowed plains, they built on faith and hope, and presently they found they had built too much.

## I

The migration which followed the transcontinental lines West left the rural churches in the East depleted. After 1906 every state in the old Northwest territory began to show a slight decrease in the number of churches.<sup>4</sup> This was certainly due to a diminished rural population and the marked increase

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<sup>4</sup>Ten years later Ohio, Illinois and Michigan showed an increase. But there was during this period a very marked increase of urban population in these three states. Detroit, Chicago and Cleveland alone would almost account for the increase. Michigan gained most, and yet this was a period of high mortality for the rural churches in Michigan and the half-deserted churches in the lumber regions.

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in "tenant farming." Between 1916 and 1926 every state but two in the west north-central region showed losses. These were the very states where the Church Extension Societies had formerly been most active. Curiously enough the mountain states kept gaining. In all the mountain states however—save Colorado—Roman Catholics and Mormons combined outnumbered Protestants.

One may conclude, then, that by 1906 the Protestant churches reflected over-expansion in the West, faced a diminishing rural population throughout the country and began for the first time to feel the cost of their competitive divisions. Up to this time—save in the East—the general growth of the country had absorbed the loss as it had absorbed so many other costly misadventures. A divided Protestantism also faced rapidly growing, unified Roman Catholicism, for immigration during this period was preponderantly Catholic.

Protestantism met these conditions with a measure of co-operative action which has taken many forms but principally federation, comity, very impressive bodies of resolutions setting forth the desirability of organic church unity, a very considerable number of joint commissions and conferences discussing it, and some actual though very modest achievement of it. Federation and comity remain the outstanding co-operative achievements of the last thirty years. The Free Church Council in England furnished a model for federation. There divided Non-conformists, realizing their strategic weakness in face of the social and political power of the Established Church, had federated themselves with highly assuring results. Parliament had to reckon with the Free-Church conscience, cabinets with the Free-Church vote, the Chairman of the Council had a seat in the Abbey at Coronations.

The American churches were instructed by their example. State federations were formed in America so early as 1900 and

1901<sup>5</sup> and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was organized at Philadelphia in 1908. The introduction to the first official report of the Federal Council<sup>6</sup> rehearses the steps which led to its organization: In 1903 the National Federation of Churches and Christian Workers had been persuaded that the "time was ripe for the consideration of the possibilities of church federation by an officially delegated convention." An Inter-Church Conference in 1905 "brought together the chosen representatives of thirty Christian bodies . . . having an aggregate membership of more than seventeen million communicants." These chosen representatives adopted a Plan of Federation which was ratified in due time, for church Judicatories, Conferences and Councils move slowly. This plan became the working constitution of the Council whose avowed purpose it was "to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and coöperation among them."

The federal manifestation of "essential oneness" was somewhat incomplete—Unitarians and Universalists were not included and the more conservative Lutheran churches declined to associate themselves with the Council. But it was an impressive and potent gathering of American evangelical Protestantism. The movement marked, the secretary believed, "a new era in the history of Christianity and gave promise that the churches of our country will in the future stand together as never before in united efforts for the advancement of the Kingdom of God." The Rev. Dr. Charles F. Aked went further. He felt "one would be chargeable with no exaggeration, but with a daring prevision of faith, who saw in the movement

<sup>5</sup> See *Protestant Coöperation in American Cities*, H. Paul Douglass, Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York, 1930, a massive assembling of facts bearing upon every phase of church federation.

<sup>6</sup> *Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America*, The Revell Press, New York, 1909.

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for the federation of Protestant Christianity upon this continent the greatest effort of the Spirit of God poured out upon the peoples since the day of Pentecost itself." These generous hopes have on the whole been more substantially fulfilled than many other glowing anticipations of a period which specialized in anticipation.

### II

The Council has been fortunate in wise and clear-visioned leaders who have brought to their task a high quality of Christian statesmanship. The years from 1908 to 1932 were trying years for any idealist and most of all Christian idealists. It is a testimony to their sagacity and tenacity of purpose that they have kept to the rough—and for a while tragically reddened—roads Christian faith and hope have had to use with so distinctive a measure of courage and achievement. The Council has not always moved as rapidly as the leaders of the skirmish line of the Church Militant have wished but it has moved as fast in its corporate action as the supporting public opinion of its many-minded constituency, and faster than the rear guard and its baggage train. Its executive group and commission have for the most part taken advanced positions with commendable courage and forthrightness of speech.<sup>7</sup>

The Rev. William Hayes Ward, long time editor of the *Independent* and valiant supporter of all generous idealisms,

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<sup>7</sup>The gentlemen who meet every four years in the quadrennial of the Council are naturally the older and more cautious members of their communions. By the time a minister attains the dignity of being a delegate he has commonly lost a little of the ardor of his youth. The writer attended a session or two of the 1928 conference in Rochester. The delegates who did most of the talking were really quite cautious. They doubted the wisdom of approving a resolution on war which went no further than the Kellogg Pact, without consulting their denominational official bodies. One well-known Southern Bishop thought it might again be necessary for militant Christians "to vindicate the justice of Almighty God and protect the honor of their wives and daughters." Their final action was, however, on all social and international questions as far in advance of the general opinion of their churches as they dared to go. No more could be expected of the leaders of churches so identified with the general going concern of American society.

was Chairman of the first Program Committee, and the themes which he and his associates brought before the first meeting of the Council for discussion have been generally central in the Council programs ever since. The Council then addressed itself to Religious Education, Interdenominational Relations, Coöperation in Foreign Missions, State and Local Federations, Coöperation in Home Missions, The Church and Modern Industry, Temperance, Sunday Observance and International Relations.

Twenty years later the Committees had become Commissions in Evangelism and Life Service, Christian Education, the Church and Social Service, International Justice and Goodwill, Race Relations, Research and Education, Relations with Religious Bodies in Europe and the East. Receipts from all sources were \$13,815.39 in 1909 and \$425,624.15 in 1928. In 1908 denominations and churches gave about two-thirds of the modest budget, in 1928 they gave less than one-fourth.<sup>8</sup> The Council had become a great corporation with a staff of specialists acting along a wide front of contemporaneous religious, ethical and social life. Almost all the regions in which it acts are controversial, some of them highly so. Its work has never been easy and has grown more difficult as the strain between Christian idealism and the drive—or drift—of the present social and industrial order has become more pronounced and more evident.

A very great deal of the substance of this book—or any other study of contemporaneous religion—is directly or indirectly between the covers of the successive reports of the Council. They are milestones by which to measure changing minds, changing methods and changing men. Little things are significant. There were never, I take it, in any single volume

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<sup>8</sup> From successive reports of The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

save possibly *Who's Who* so many "D.D.'s," "LL.D.'s," "Ph.D.'s" and other honorific variants of the letters of the alphabet as in the first Council report. In 1928 they are all gone. The portraits which handsomely adorn the first volume indicate, if the subjects are not episcopal in vestments, silk-lapelled "Prince Albert" coats with some survival of "white ties." There are no photogravures in the last volume and there were no frock coats at Rochester nor any white ties.

The first volume is mostly addresses, very good addresses, by the then outstanding leaders and preachers of American Protestantism. They reflect the mind of their time. Henry Wade Rogers spoke on International Relations. He was hopeful of a time "when International Law will be administered by an International Court and nations no more than individuals will be permitted to settle their disputes by force." He quoted Mr. Asquith, then British Prime Minister, who had lately been addressing the British delegates to the Seventeenth Universal Peace Congress. He was enthusiastic over forty-seven treaties of obligatory arbitration. He saw in the Hague conferences and the Permanent Court (for which Andrew Carnegie had just provided a suitable building) the hope of a world which had come at last to see the impossible cost and unchristian folly of war. The Council declared that war is an evil, demanded obligatory arbitration and an International Court of Arbitral Justice. It hoped that the Government of the United States would promote its establishment "at the earliest possible day," and it designated the Sunday before Christmas as Peace Sunday.

The Rt. Rev. William Croswell Doane said that the time had come to speak "with no bated breath" about the "painful and revolting" subject of birth control. He asked for the prohibition of "so-called Neo-Malthusian appliances" and "the prosecution of all who publicly and professionally assist pre-



ventive methods.”<sup>9</sup> The Council took, for the time, a strong and advanced position on the relation of the churches to the social order and adopted the “Social Creed” (already quoted), which, next to the organization of the Council itself, was probably the most significant achievement of its first session. Next in importance—perhaps equally important—were the addresses and recommendations dealing with coöperation in foreign and home missions.

The Report of the Council for 1928<sup>10</sup> was, for the most part, a review of its first twenty years whose accomplishment Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary, among others summed up in a dozen pregnant paragraphs.<sup>11</sup> They constitute a record of strategic achievement. The organization of the Council did date an epoch in American Christianity. It has been more than an agency for coöperative action, it has functioned effectively in another region vital to the well-being of society. The strength and weakness of evangelical American Protestantism have been, both of them, in its intimate association with the general going concern of American life. It has given hostages to finance and fluctuating public opinion. No mystic conception gives awe, authority and apartness either to the ministry or the Church in themselves. Few ancient endowments confer financial independence either for good or evil upon either the churches or their ministry. The Protestant denominations have never had the social, legislative and traditional prestige of the established Church in England. There has been no “third order” in America.

Churches which live from hand to mouth out of their offertory plates are always under the control directly or not too indirectly of their more forceful and well-to-do communi-

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<sup>9</sup> The Bishop quoted as authority against birth control “utterance of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion recently gathered in Lambeth.” But a Council Commission and the Lambeth Bishops have since changed their attitude.

<sup>10</sup> *Twenty Years of Church Federation*, New York, 1929.

<sup>11</sup> Page 11.

cants. Their advances are likely to be cautious and their judgments often enough the spacious—though sincere—sanctification of the dominant public opinion of their region or their time. It would be easy to document this statement from the record of the social and political attitudes of the American pulpit throughout American history. There have been arresting exceptions, of course, but the fact remains. When public opinion is heated and his own congregation involved a minister who takes an unpopular side is in for trouble, and unless he is a man of unusual force he cannot ride out the storm.

The Federal Council has supplied a detached and authoritative agency. Its representatives have gone into communities shell-shocked by strikes and industrial disputes, into one city at least<sup>12</sup> where even strong churches and churchmen were in No Man's Land between the agencies of public opinion hostile to organized labor and the justifiable indignation of labor leaders at the apparently nerveless attitude of the churches, have found out the facts, have spoken with a voice to which the nation listened and have supported helpless individualism with corporate action and courage.

The programs of the Council have often been ahead of supporting public church opinion—something must be ahead of even church opinion if it ever gets anywhere—but the Council has furnished a standard to which the wise man—and the hard pressed—can repair. Naturally the Council has had troubles of its own. The interests of twenty-six denominations are not easy to reconcile, their far-flung mind hard to formulate. Its concern for social issues has alienated powerful interests and threatened its income. It has here and there given ground a little but it has never yielded a strategic position. And it has learned from the years. Nothing can in the end be wholly detached from the general interests of society. But the Federal Council has brought to American Protestantism

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<sup>12</sup> Detroit.

enough of corporate detachment and enough of corporate method to have met a vital need.

## III

The Federal Council has formulated the social ideals of American Protestantism, spoken for it in times of crisis, reinforced its imperiled sectors and indicated strategic lines of ethical and religious advance. The actual situations created by shifting rural and urban populations, the slow decay of some regions and the too quick development of others have been met by state and city federations and what Paul Douglass calls "the evolution of comity."<sup>18</sup> (Dr. Douglass's "evolution" is emergent rather than triumphant.) His study is confined to the cities, in general to cities of more than 50,000 population. The older eastern cities of from twenty-five to fifty thousand inhabitants are in a class by themselves; their church problems are generally due to the displacement of the old American stock by the immigrant. The major American cities, he notes, have increased their population by almost eight million in the last decade; cities of from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand population have gained, between them, a million and one half. The major part of this growth has been at the expense of villages and rural regions. Catholic as well as Protestant churches have felt the impact of strong city-ward tides but Protestantism has been affected most by the withdrawal of supporting village and rural constituencies, their swift concentration in the larger cities and their unstable residence habits in the cities themselves.

As a result the older city churches began to seek relocation. Their "best people" had moved uptown, out of town, nearer the country club—anywhere but nearer the Sanctuary. There might be twice as many people within sound of their bells—

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<sup>18</sup> *Church Comity, A Study of Coöperative Church Extension in American Cities*, H. Paul Douglass, Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., New York, 1929.

## "WE ARE NOT DIVIDED"

if they had any—as before, but the elect did not know what to do with or for them. The “downtown” churches were likely to be supported and controlled by a tenacious and diminishing membership who had a just pride in their sacred traditions and were temperamentally unable to adapt themselves to a “popular” church. Increased real estate values had often made their property very valuable. They saw the hand of God in it all and voted to move.

Meanwhile the extension boards (local or national) were anxious to organize new churches, and their shrewd representatives sought strategic locations. Result: a highly competitive situation. A state federation or so was older than the Federal Council,<sup>14</sup> the Council encouraged a general system of state federations, the state and national federations between them got the denominations in most outstanding cities federated. The resolution of interdenominational competition into something approaching Christian comity and plain common sense turned out to be about the most important—and difficult—function of the local federations.

Douglass cites sixteen typical situations the comity committee of one city met in a year. They included a survey of new suburban areas, location or purchase of church sites, proposed relocations of churches, mergers of churches in the same denomination, looking after sections left unchurched and protecting fields threatened by a concentration of militantly advancing churches. In a sentence, so to direct the religious resources of a growing city as to meet all its needs and as far as possible avoid future repentances for sins of omission and commission. Christian comity has been facilitated in such cities as Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Los Angeles and Detroit by their magical increase of population. There were always strategic situations enough for all promot-

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<sup>14</sup> *E.g.*, New York, Ohio and Rhode Island. Douglass, *Protestant Coöperation*.

ing denominational agencies and an unbespoken margin. Occasionally a strong-minded ecclesiastic violated the peace pact but he saved it from becoming a "scrap of paper" by pleading self-defense. And a shrewd eye for promising new residence developments has often proved as valuable as the graces of the Spirit.

Comity has been only one of the departments of federated church activity. The local federations in the wealthier large cities were by 1920 vigorous going concerns. Their executive secretaries were men of initiative and matured diplomacy, with the right of entry into the offices of editors and high city officials. They were among those present at important civic functions. Their offices were the clearing houses of religious interests. The Detroit Council of Churches (which I take as typical because I know it best) functioned through a half-dozen departments.

It put specialists at the service of religious education, advised and rebuked mayors and police commissioners, softened race antagonisms, did a good deal to avert one race war, parceled an always growing city among its constituent denominations, secured adequate publicity for all its enterprises, worked in fraternal ways with the local Catholic clergy and the Jewish rabbis, brought well-known preachers to the city for Lenten services, coöperated in getting merchants to close their stores for three hours on Good Friday and the theaters to surrender their stages to Good Friday speakers.<sup>15</sup> The Council maintained a recognized place for institutional religion amidst all the other interests of an American city at the crest of its tide of prosperity and growth. It had to use some of the methods of the "go-getter" and the advertising specialist to do it but it was all for the greater glory of God. The industrial orchestra was then using its brasses and all its instruments of percussion.

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<sup>15</sup> 52,238 people attended the noonday Lenten and Good Friday services in Detroit in 1927; 28,965 in 1932.

A still small voice was not heard far in that hoarse music. Other cities were doing, with inevitable variations, much the same thing. The funded result has been socially, ethically and religiously constructive. The force and complexity of American society during the period here studied have demanded from the churches, if they were not to become negligible forces in the direction of public opinion, an authority that isolated and competitive denominations could not have asserted.<sup>16</sup> Massed Protestantism became a force to be reckoned with—even in politics. The movement naturally developed religious leaders who needed no instruction in political technique from the secular politician. The crusades for peace and prohibition (which we shall presently consider) were fundamentally church crusades directed by men who may not have put the pure fear of God into the hearts of state and federal legislators but certainly did inspire them with a godly fear of the church vote. Interdenominational agencies have been supplemented by the agencies of the stronger denominations, and the cumulative force of aggressive churchmanship has told strongly in legislation and the direction of public opinion.

If the critic of political Christianity should maintain that the churches have thus accentuated the already excessive American confidence in legislation, have exchanged their own proper methods of moral education for political action and, in their legislative zeal for a godly, righteous and sober world, have outrun the moral forces by which such legislation must be enabled, he would find facts to support his contention. If he should also maintain that some ecclesiastical politicians have shown themselves more adept in using the methods of this present evil world than in furnishing it an example of pure and undefiled religion, he could find illustrations.

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<sup>16</sup> Since writing this section I have read Paul Douglass's last study (previously referred to). It is impossible even to indicate its range but its seventeen pages of index reflect the variety of forces, interests, enterprises and attitudes involved in coöperative church activity.

## IV

Protestant churches have, for specific purposes, effected measures of coöperation more representative, in some ways, of their unity of spirit than their association in the Federal Council. The Home Missions Council, for example, is the official creation of the various denominations concerned. It functions through a pretty close association of the secretaries or other directors of home missionary organizations, seeks to liquidate the results of the period of unregulated expansion and prevent the like in the future. It is a practical agency of great value. The directors of the foreign missionary enterprises of the churches have a similar clearing house and endeavor to correlate their work, though they find it difficult to quicken the pace of their American constituencies to the growing demand for Christian unity from Indian, Chinese and Japanese Christians.

The demand for church unity has not, however, been entirely confined to the Orient. The American Protestant church groups have within the last generation recognized clearly the conditions to which the multiplicity of denominations has brought them. By the middle of the last century the phase of excessive denominational branching had passed its peak and by 1900 church-union movements began to take form in the United States, vague and mostly wanting in definite results, but significant. They were variously motivated. The sensitive felt the reproach of a divided Church, the idealist felt the allure of a universal Church, the practical-minded saw the waste of a competitive system and, very likely, the ambitious considered the highly desirable estate of office in such a Church. Divided Protestantism was plainly handicapped in the face of united Roman Catholicism, and the militant felt the need for a more strategic mobilization. The sheer political power of a super-Church has had its attraction also.

The institutional conception of Christianity was beginning

to be, as it has continued to be, in the ascendant; if Christianity is an institution it is natural to want it imposing and sovereign. Somewhere through all the discussion of the period was the contention that since everything also was being massed the Church should be massed also. The churches were also beginning to feel, a little, some loss of self-justification, some disturbing doubt of their *raison d'être*. Church-union movements gave them something quite definite to do. Finally when denominational controversy had lost its edge, some dim, disturbing sense of a more inexorable antagonist than the church on the next corner stirred the far-sighted to action.

There was, and is, a good deal to be said on the other side. The outstanding communions are the final deposit of different tempers, social environments and contestant conceptions of Christianity itself. They give free play to the diverse elements which combine to make religion—even Christianity. There is a place for both the conservative and the liberal, the facing seat of the Friends and the altar of St. Peter's. There is room in the imperial enterprise of Christianity for the authority of the congregation and the authority of the bishop, with all that lies between.

A super-Church in a democracy, so given as American democracy to seek moral ends through legislative action, is not an unqualified ideal. Denominational variations have contributed to the total wealth of religious expression and have been the useful instruments of a very necessary liberty. A spirit of accommodation, a generous permission of the right to differ not now in action in any department of American life, would be needed in an organically united American Church if it were not to break beneath the strains to which its structure would have to adjust itself. But church-union has not yet become evident enough to justify such apprehensions. The principal strain so far has been in getting any at all. All the denominations have commissions or committees therefor, diplo-



matic "conversations" have been held and reports of progress—or the contrary—made.<sup>17</sup>

## V

The reunion of dissevered members of "pattern" communions has gone furthest, though there is still ample room in this most promising field. In 1905 the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States effected organic unity. Negotiations for the reunion of the Methodist Episcopal Churches North and South were carried on for a decade. In 1926 the Southern Church rejected the plan.<sup>18</sup> Three Lutheran bodies have combined to create the United Lutheran Church. Other Lutheran bodies have voted to unite. The Congregational and Christian Churches have achieved as complete organic unity as is possible for churches with independent congregational government. In 1928 the Methodist General Conference made overtures for union with the Presbyterian Church of the United States. The General Assembly responded cordially and commissions of these two great communions have since been in conference. Such a union, if consummated, would certainly give very great impetus to the movement for Protestant organic union.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in America and the established Church in England have consistently sought the reunion of Christendom on the four-point basis: The Holy Scriptures, The Nicene Creed, the Two Sacraments and the Historic Episcopate. Both these communions have within the last thirty years come increasingly under the control of the High Church party and their strong insistence upon the Episcopate and sacramentarianism has deepened rather than diminished the gulf between them and the non-episcopal com-

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<sup>17</sup> The United Church of Canada is, of course, a challenging exception to all these statements.

<sup>18</sup> Sweet, *The Story of Religions in America*, pages 519 to 523.

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munions. No bridge of words, or dispositions either, strong enough to carry the traffic of a united Church has, as yet, been built across that gulf.<sup>19</sup> Doctrinal differences have furnished evangelical Protestantism with cleavages of its own. The gulf between the "modernist" and the "fundamentalist" is actually as deep as between the sacramentarian and evangelical churches, and the interchanges of opinion from the opposite sides far less irenic.

The Rev. William A. Sunday, whose infinite variety age, apparently, "cannot wither, nor custom stale," said in Memphis, Tennessee, in January, 1932, that: "The liberal ministers are a lot of Judases and deserve the fate of Judas. . . . They are a lot of pussy-footing, white-livered, yellow softies. . . . If the churches would teach the virgin birth, the literal resurrection and the second coming of Christ, the evangelistic fires would burn once more and do more good in this Christ-hating, God-blaspheming world than all the disarmament conferences and leagues of nations."<sup>20</sup> A Church seamed with the inherited fissures of the centuries and such new eruptive passions is a long way from any kind of unity. But it is, nevertheless, a Church of unconquerable hopes and idealisms and, though halted in its attempt to bring together even very close ecclesiastical organizations, it has sought within the last generation to unite the whole of Christendom.

### VI

The divisions of Christendom have always, in a measure, complicated the foreign missionary work of the churches. Differences which have had, through their historical development and social setting, some actual meaning in Western society, have been increasingly difficult to justify in Asia and Africa.

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<sup>19</sup> The proposal of the late Dr. Newman Smythe of New Haven that ministers should in the future receive both episcopal and non-episcopal ordination offered the most promising way out of the impasse. But it has apparently proved impracticable since nothing is now said about it.

<sup>20</sup> *The Christian Century*, January 27, 1932.

The passions of the American Civil War which divided Methodist and Presbyterian Churches into "North" and "South" could hardly be reasonably continued in China, where, if civil war is to create new denominations, the wars native to the soil of the Celestial Kingdom would seem to be sufficient. The Oriental mind was not subtle enough to understand the fine theological or liturgical differences which divided Western Christianity; it was subtle enough to see that the variety of boards and banners under which its conversion was sought seemed unduly to complicate the Christian gospel of human brotherhood, while the characteristic impacts of Western civilization upon alien races and civilizations flatly contradicted it.

The boards had always in a measure escaped their difficulty by an allocation of territory—there were always non-Christian regions enough for all. The more sensitive among the missionaries themselves felt the paradoxes of the situation and urged the need of a united Church. The movement for an actually international Christianity and an actually united Church has had a force and sincerity in the "foreign field" it has not possessed in Europe and America. The Edinburgh Missionary Conference (1916) was the first international gathering of Christian leaders. Its marked success led Bishop Brent and others to believe that a similar conference in matters of faith and order might be productive of good.<sup>21</sup> The General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States a little later on the motion of the Rev. Dr. Manning (not then a Bishop) appointed a joint committee to call together "representatives of all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, for the consideration of questions pertaining to the Faith and Order of the Church of Christ."

The joint committee was convinced such a conference

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<sup>21</sup> *Faith and Order, Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, August 3-21, 1927, page vii.*

would be desirable provided it was "without power to legislate or to adopt resolutions." A church conference of any sort without power to adopt resolutions suffers an initial handicap but the conference was thus limited to a consideration of situations and the exchange of opinion which would, it was believed, "be the next step toward unity."<sup>22</sup> Thereupon a joint commission was appointed to carry forward the project.

Other communions took the same line. The Congregationalists had appointed a special commission to consider any overtures looking to Church unity, and the Disciples of Christ had also taken a similar action. There was during the next three years a great movement of deputations and commissions bearing and accepting invitations. All the branches of the Anglican Church promised coöperation. Protestant communions in the United States responded cordially. The language and technique of international diplomacy were adopted. Negotiations were carried on with the Orthodox Church of Russia, "conversations" held with Roman Catholic dignitaries, the English Free Churches were favorable. Pamphlets in many languages supported the enterprise and "a great work of propaganda" was carried on. Liberal donors supplied the necessary money, among whom J. Pierpont Morgan, long an earnest and effective organizer of financial and economic conferences looking toward unity, was conspicuous.

The war interrupted these conversations and negotiations but they were resumed in 1918 with added and sanguinary arguments for some more effective association of Christian brethren. A deputation visited the "Near East" using the old sea ways St. Paul had once used and visiting the regions in which the historic councils of a once-undivided Church were convened. The Roman Church met the overtures of the deputation with its historic *non possumus*, but "the official refusal

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, same page.

of the invitation was balanced by the personal friendship and benevolence of the Pope." The movement had so far progressed by 1920 that the representatives of forty nations and some seventy sovereign churches met at Geneva, which was then assuming its status as the capital of the hopes and dreams of a coöperative world. The Geneva conference demonstrated that the representatives of Christian communions lately dissevered by war and divided by old differences of race and faith and order could amicably consider the general estate of Christendom. A Continuation Committee was appointed under whose direction the Lausanne conference took definite form.

All this seems remote from the affairs of American Protestantism, but as a matter of record the motivating, organizing and, what was most important of all, the financing of the Lausanne Conference, were so largely the work of the American churches as to make this most imposing gathering of the churches throughout the world since the fourth and fifth centuries an American creation. It was also an arresting testimony to the contradiction of the American temperament. While ecclesiastical internationalism was thus being promoted by the churches (the Hon. Charles Evans Hughes being chairman of the committee on finance), the United States Senate was rejecting the League of Nations, and the country was falling back into an exaggerated normalcy of international isolation.

## VII

The conference so long and arduously promoted met at Lausanne in 1927. The University of Lausanne housed the sessions grandiosely; the old Cathedral, with the narrow twisting streets about it which had once been the old walled city, supplied a noble setting for its ecclesiastical pageantry; the pleasant gardens, in which the delegates refreshed themselves after their arduous labors, looked down upon a lake whose

shores were still haunted by memories of John Calvin, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire. One wonders what these mighty shades would have said of the conference. Over a hundred communions were represented, though many of them were variants of dominant groups, such as Anglican, Eastern, the Evangelical Churches of Germany, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans and others. There were between three and four hundred delegates, the leaders, dignitaries and high ecclesiastics of non-Roman Catholic Christendom. Names in a dozen languages meet on any single page of the list of delegates, followed by every honorary degree by which learning may be implied, piety honored and conspicuous success in churchmanship rewarded.

The vestments of the churchmen—especially from the Eastern Church—were even more impressive than the doctorates. A student of the Christian religion would have found it an arresting exemplification of the many and long roads Christianity has traveled since it took its departure from the Galilean hills. The student of religion generally would have found it a profitable reminder of the complexities of the religious mind. The historian would have seen fourteen hundred years of Church history in procession beneath the shadow of the Alps.

For the conference really assembled in living pride and power and conviction the tenacious survival of everything—save Roman Catholicism—Christianity is or has been since the fourth century. There were no chasms in the Bernese Oberland so deep as the imponderable depths which actually separated the conference into its historic, racial and temperamental groups. It was too much to expect in three weeks, the reconciliation of the estranged inheritances of a millennium and a half, but the interchange of opinion and sincere endeavor to find among elements so diverse a common Christian mind were

themselves signal achievements. There had been nothing quite like it since Nicæa and Constantinople.

The conference considered these subjects: The Church's Message to the World; The Nature of the Church; The Church's Common Confession of Faith; The Church's Ministry; The Sacraments; The Unity of Christendom. The reports, addresses and debates upon these themes make a weighty volume of five hundred pages. There is much to instruct, enough to perplex and too much to confuse in it all; also the evidence of an exceedingly well-lubricated machinery.

The conference received unanimously, with here and there a conscientious reservation, the report on the Message of the Church. In other regions, especially the Ministry, the Nature of the Church and the Sacraments, the strain of opposed tempers and historic inheritances was much in evidence. The Eastern Church, through its archbishops, said that "as a matter of conscience it could not accept the Reports on the Nature of the Church and the Common Confession of Faith." It also felt that agreement on other sections could be reached only by "vague phrases or by a compromise of antithetical opinions." The idea of reunion, it thought, would need to be postponed until (apparently) the churches there represented should be willing to accept in their entirety the Faith and Order of the Eastern Church. The archbishops commended the conference to the peace and grace of God—and withdrew from its sessions. The conference, through its president, accepted their position with godly sorrow—and went on with its agenda; the impartial student of the proceeding can, at least, commend their refreshing honesty.

The Society of Friends also professed itself equally unable to accept the reports though they would "warmly receive them for study." Carl Heath's statement would be likely to command the assent of the practical layman both for clarity of statement and sagacity. "The vast multitude of men," he said,

## "WE ARE NOT DIVIDED"

"who are slowly moving out of the Church are indifferent to Church order but greatly interested in the reality of the spiritual life." No single statement could more clearly define the gulf between the mind of the time and the conference of Lausanne.

### VIII

The conference managed, at the end, to dramatize for all the world to see—or as much of the world as was watching—the inherent incompatibilities of ecclesiastical Christendom. The subtle distinctions of the reports, the efforts to "compromise antithetical opinion" belonged to a rarefied region the realistically minded do not much frequent. But when they saw the representatives of the great Christian communions unable to meet in the Sacrament of Christian brotherhood which the One whose name they all bore had instituted to keep alive among all His followers, through the sharing of it, the memory of His love and sacrifice, they saw before them in the old Cathedral a new demonstration, which the man in the street could understand, of the alienations which seam the Christian order and knew that the reunion of Christendom was indefinitely postponed.

The Vatican has never gone further in any non-Catholic movement toward unity than graciously to permit itself to be conversed with. Some years ago the Anglo-Catholics sought from the Pope the recognition of their "orders"; no recognition was granted. The Pope has from time to time—and while this is being written—mourned the divided estate of Christendom and invited the wandering sheep to return to the true fold of the Mother Church; the responses have not been encouraging. Overtures for reunion between any of the historic communions are for the present hopeless. Christendom can only wait therefore till time has further done its reconciling—or dissolving—work.



## CHAPTER VIII

### "ALL ONE ARMY WE"—THE CRUSADING CHURCH AT HOME AND ABROAD

THE FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS of the twentieth century may sometime be remembered in America as the Age of Crusades. There were a superabundance of zeal, a sufficiency of good causes, unusual moral idealism, excessive confidence in mass movements and leaders with rare gifts of popular appeal. The people were ready to cry "God wills it" and set out for world peace, prohibition, the Progressive Party, the "New Freedom" or "the World for Christ in this Generation." The air was full of banners, and the trumpets called from every camp. It was a brave time in which to be alive.

The churches shared the general crusading zeal and inaugurated enterprises of their own. Something of all this was native to the temper of Christianity; it has always been conscious of an imperial mandate and sought to subdue to its administration all the enterprises of life. Catholicism has asked of the individual entire obedience to the spiritual authority of the Church and, beyond this, left him a considerable measure of freedom in his vocations and avocations. Protestantism has asked less in purely ecclesiastical regions and more in the control of habit. The Puritan tradition in America tended toward an excess of religio-social control in that no-man's-land of secular habit where the world and the flesh contend for the administration of our human ways.

American churches had also inherited a tradition of crusades; anti-slavery, anti-alcoholic, anti-Sabbath desecration, anti a good many marginal things which do not always seem to have been worth the amount of moral indignation wasted upon them. When one adds the inherited American confidence

in the moral efficacy of legislation and a general expectation of securing almost any desirable thing by passing a law about it, one has the general background for American crusading, social, moral and political. Twentieth century church crusades were also a continuation, in social, moral and even political regions, of nineteenth century evangelism. Bryan, Roosevelt, Wilson were the Moodys and Finneys of a former generation reincarnate, with much the same technique, the same tremendous power over their audiences, the same concern for their salvation. The salvation they offered was quite different—and bitterly debated—but that was only a detail. The passion was there, the appeal to emotion, the theme of redemption, the evangelist's persuasion of his divine calling.

The movements now to be considered fit exactly into this pattern. They launched their attack on definite evils, they created their own machinery, they broke through denominational barriers and overrode denominational prejudices.<sup>1</sup> They were the Church Militant riding out again to a holy war. They were for the most part, in their inception, the creation of individuals who vigorously envisaged a cause and created a contagious enthusiasm for it. They were rarely launched by official church-action. The denominations involved drew off from the fundamentalist-modernist controversy under cover of a campaign for evangelism or some extensive denominational movement. These earlier crusades were less ecclesiastical and more spontaneous. They also furnished another and vital opportunity for the display of that growing spirit of unity which the last chapter considered.

## I

The cross lines of such movements are hard to disentangle. They include (in America) the Young Men's and

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<sup>1</sup> See *Modern Evangelistic Movements*, a "group" book edited by "Two University Men," George H. Doran Company, New York, 1924—introduction generally.

Young Women's Christian Associations, Societies of Christian Endeavor, Men's Brotherhood campaigns for specific ends such as the Laymen's Missionary Movement and the Men and Religion Forward Movement, student federations and the crusades against alcohol and war. The more inclusive involved international religious relationships and achieved, largely outside the frontiers of the churches, the most representative catholicity and actual realization of human brotherhood which Christianity has so far exhibited.

It is best, probably, to begin with one or two representative movements in the United States and end with such enterprises as have had an international character. The Laymen's Missionary Movement was exactly what its name implies; an effort to secure from the men of all the churches a more intelligent and whole-hearted support of their missionary enterprises. The Student Volunteer Movement (one must use "movement" repetitiously, there is no other word) had already led many young people to offer themselves as missionaries; they were on fire to win the world for Christ in their generation and victoriously complete the unfinished task of nineteen hundred years. Their leaders believed it could be done if only the men of America would match their dollars against this self-consecration of youth.

Dr. J. Campbell White, who will be remembered as the most commanding figure in the movement, generously credits John B. Sleman, Jr., of Washington, D. C., with the paternity of the enterprise. If he was the real father of the Laymen's Missionary Movement<sup>2</sup> White was certainly its godfather, for Sleman found his inspiration in a great convention of the United Presbyterian Church which White assembled in Pittsburgh in 1905. "He felt that if the laymen of all the

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<sup>2</sup>This section is deeply in debt to memoranda by J. Campbell White and Dr. S. Earl Taylor graciously furnished by Dr. Cavert, Executive Secretary of the Federal Council.

churches could be led to face up to the missionary situation throughout the world, as the United Presbyterian laymen had been persuaded to do, it would lead to a great awakening of missionary interest on the part of all churches." The next year Sleman attended the Student Volunteer Convention at Nashville and felt strongly the challenge of the thousands of students there assembled. The fields of Asia and Africa were ripe for Christian harvest, the laborers were ready, they needed only to be sent.

The time was propitious. One hundred years earlier (1806) a few students at Williams College had habitually gathered to pray for the world under the shelter of a haystack in Berkshire Meadows. The great enterprise of American foreign missions was the answer to their prayers. How better could so significant an anniversary be kept than by a rebirth of missionary zeal? The laymen of the New York churches were assembled through Sleman's efforts in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in November, 1906. Dr. Taylor believed that meeting second in significance only to the haystack meetings themselves—only the quiet meadows were wanting. The Laymen's Movement was born and christened.

The technique of the campaign has since been used so often as to need no detailed description. Meetings of business men (it was the period of the glorification of the "business man") were arranged in the leading cities of the United States and Canada. Trained organizers arranged the detail. The movement may, possibly, have been almost as memorable for having inaugurated the crusade dinner as for its service to the cause of missions. It carried on by a series of dinners of such magnitude as to have created, according to Dr. Earl Taylor, a demand for dishes, knives and forks and spoons to which the smaller cities were not always equal. A conservative church, which thought the dinner a carnal device unworthy of so spiritual a cause, was able, according to the same author-

ity, to seat its audience in the front pew. Since then religious strategists have recognized that even the army of the Lord moves on its stomach.

Speakers chosen for their effective power with men addressed the dinners and a conference period followed. Campbell White proved the most effective of these elect groups. No money was asked for; the enthusiasm created was expected to express itself practically through established denominational agencies. It was difficult, therefore, as in the case of similar movements, to tell just what came of it. Interest in missions was certainly quickened, men of affairs were interested, the sense of Christian solidarity strengthened. The movement paralleled the new method of getting money (to which reference has already been made) and doubtless fed into it. Leaders were enlisted who profoundly influenced the missionary enterprise of the next period, and a method of appeal was perfected which was thereafter widely used. If the world has not since been saved, it has not been for the want of earnest-minded diners.

## II

*Collier's Weekly* told its readers on December 23, 1914, that American religion was now "Going After Souls on a Business Basis." The enterprises of salvation were to be baptized into the bright efficiency of the American business method, and such results could be confidently looked for as were being realized in steel, rails and other secular concerns.<sup>8</sup> The Men and Religion Forward Movement was in full action and *Collier's* saw in it an effective adaptation of the technique of business to religion. The movement itself was by far the most considerable joint enterprise the religious forces of the nation had ever undertaken. It is still, by any test, the most

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<sup>8</sup>I have translated the article rather freely. It was more literally a sympathetic account of the scope and aim and efficiency of the Men and Religion Forward Movement.

representative. It was a statesmanlike conception effectively organized, brilliantly advertised, and carried through to the finish.

The temper of the time was favorable to it. Truslow Adams calls the period "the age of the dinosaurs"; "a combination of elements suddenly brought into existence in our social and economic world, huge business combinations . . . of a hitherto undreamed of size,"<sup>4</sup> their force seemed irresistible, they enthralled—and disturbed—the popular imagination, they trained executives adroit in the business of organization, accustomed the nation to enterprises of unparalleled magnitude. The time had ceased to think simply and in terms of the individual. It thought grandiosely in terms of massed action, substituted efficiency for ethics and looked to the Christian business man for those blessings for which a less sophisticated age had looked to God.<sup>5</sup>

There were minor notes of dissent and, among the thoughtful, considerable uneasiness. Adams thinks the dinosaurs to have probably lost out in the struggle for survival through lack of brain power—but it took time to demonstrate that. America was not then ready to question the intelligence of its own Wall Street dinosaurs. It was intrigued by Nietzsche's "superman" and rather fancied it was actually breeding him. Clear-sighted thinkers did feel a moral overstrain.<sup>6</sup> Religion was being overshadowed, they felt, by these prodigious growths; they had an uneasy sense that they were getting out of hand; capitalists also felt the strain, and believed a revival of religion would be good for business.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Epic of America*, page 341.

<sup>5</sup> About this time George F. Baer—"The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for, not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God, in His infinite wisdom, has given control of the property interests of this country. . . ."—Adams, *op. cit.*, page 347. But the papers once discussed this at length. It produced a famous satiric poem.

<sup>6</sup> See *Moral Overstrain*, George W. Alger, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1906.

## III

A staff correspondent of the *Washington Herald* wrote his paper (March 19, 1911): "A banker in Wall Street is organizing a swift and ferocious attack on the devil in ninety cities of Mexico, Canada and the United States. Curiously enough, and congruously as well, Cannon—James Graham is his name." The proper headline shaped itself: "Plans Attack on the Devil." The interview itself was a cross-section of the mind of the time. There were "serious rumblings under the apparent smoothness" of the surface of society. Prosperity was threatened, the home in danger, American virtues were dissolving. Cannon had, however, not lost hope. Years of unprecedented prosperity were in sight but men who believed in the place and power of religion were demanded; overwhelming issues were imminent. America was the key to the world, evangelization would save America.

The movement was to be "the composite of those forces which have produced coöperation in business, progressiveness in politics and efficiency in all administration. It would borrow coöperation from big business, its progressiveness from university extension, its efficiency from the Young Men's Christian Association and the Laymen's Missionary Movement."<sup>7</sup> It began as the dream of Harry W. Arnold, a Y. M. C. A. Secretary. It enlisted the support of denominational brotherhoods (then going strong) and men whose names would give appeal to any undertaking and wrote across its banner, "Enlistment of men in the program of Jesus as the world program of daily affairs."

The Laymen's Missionary Campaign had standardized the technique; a central committee (chosen partly for the prestige of the names), an inner executive group, a budget, publicity and then more publicity, literature, selected speak-

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<sup>7</sup> *Making Religion Efficient*—Edited by Clarence A. Barbour, D.D., Association Press, New York, 1912, page 8.

ers, more literature, local organization across the continent, a schedule of dates, more publicity, an inaugural meeting in a strategic city—and “they’re off!” Dr. Barbour calls “the scheme thus conceived and shaped gigantic.” His adjective was just. Through the courtesy of Roy B. Guild, its executive secretary, I have had access to all memorabilia, records, reports, filed newspaper clippings and advertisements, campaign literature, the official *Program of Work Hand-Book* and the eight volumes of *Men and Religion Messages*. The records, reports, files and correspondence fill seven large scrap books. It is all “source-material” of incomparable value for the student of American religion directly before the war. If Godfrey of Bouillon had used a similar system, writing the history of the First Crusade would be a joy.

It is difficult to leave the fascinating detail alone. The campaign stressed Boys’ Work, Bible Study, Evangelism, Community Extension, Social Service, Home and Foreign Missions. Each local campaign began with a Period of Preparation, came to a climax in eight days of services led by six specialists, was continued in a Follow-up Period and ended with a Conservation Day which should so utilize “the methods, ideals, enthusiasms thus far secured as to mark a distinct epoch in Christian history.” There was a library of eleven volumes, exhaustive social surveys and an always growing campaign literature. It was proposed to “find 3,000,000 men missing in participation in church life” and to double all men’s Bible classes. All the denominational journals coöperated. The *New York Herald* gave the enterprise a page. There was never, it said, in the history of America so thoroughly organized a campaign. “The ring of coin will be heard very little, if at all,” since the \$250,000 required for the central office had come in with no great appeal. The local centers were expected to meet local expenses.

This expectation was not entirely realized: expenses grew



and "the ring of coin" was not heard clearly enough. There is a melancholy correspondence in the files noting this fact. The lists of participants, local and national, included the outstanding clergy and laymen of the period; church lines were forgotten. Fred B. Smith—a crusader for generous ideals whom the years since have neither wearied nor disillusioned—became perhaps the outstanding figure in the campaign, though comparison is ungracious. The popular response was entirely adequate. The "movement" crossed the continent and celebrated that considerable achievement in a men's parade in San Francisco with a chief of staff, four divisions, and a procession of the states and nations. The Thirteenth International Sunday School Convention was meeting in San Francisco at the time and the delegates joined the parade. So Godfrey of Bouillon might have reviewed his crusaders when they had reached at last the gray walls of Jerusalem.

What came of it all? The color and action of a crusade at least. Mere crusading in one historic period is said to have become so engrossing that the Holy Sepulchre was rather lost sight of in the heady adventure in which knights and barons escaped the dulness of their castled lives. Something of this was probably true of these twentieth century crusades. They brightened the routine of church life, supplied enthusiastic audiences and furnished an occasion for any amount of extremely good addresses. The time was highly objective and wanted action. The movement furnished an excuse for an excess of consecrated action and delighted the American love of going with the crowd.

But the Men and Religion Movement did get results. It increased church attendance and membership, "decreased vulgarity and profanity," reclaimed backsliders and widened the social vision of the churches. It went far toward creating a camaraderie between fathers and sons which has since been one of the more assuring aspects of American home life. It

demonstrated the value of concerted effort and it certainly served interdenominational coöperation and understanding. It was non-theological and non-ecclesiastical. It uncovered a foundation upon which liberal and conservative, Sacramentarian and Friend could work together, the foundation of devoted Christian idealism and human concern. Perhaps this is the only foundation upon which any inclusive structure of Christian unity can be built—and perhaps it is foundation enough.

## IV

The World War put a term to all these peaceful crusades. It put an end, also, to whatever might have come of them. That is why any judgment of the real value of this phase of religion in our times is so futile. After the war and while the spell of the unbelievable resources America had displayed still captured the imagination and anything seemed possible, the last crusade was proclaimed. They named it the "Interchurch World Movement"—America was incidental to its ample program. Nothing could have been conceived on a vaster scale. It aimed at nothing less than the rehabilitation of a war-ruined world and the entirely adequate endowment of every Christian enterprise. The promoters were under the spell of the prodigious action of the war and planned to mobilize all Christian fellowships and apportion among them for their enterprises the resources of the nation. They borrowed extensively from bankers whose confidence in the collateral of hope had not as yet been shaken. The denominations underwrote the amounts apportioned to them (the bankers actually lent on these "underwritings" and the pledged support of a great philanthropist) and a vast organization was built up. Everything surveyable was surveyed, including the "steel strike." There should have been tons of information received.

This movement broke down on the financial side, and disastrously, though the survey of the steel strike may have

contributed. The promoters believed in a supposititious body of givers who had no connection with the churches but who, having been trained to give in the war drives, would give again for this holiest drive of all. American wealth was inexhaustible, it needed only to be struck with the rod of Interchurch appeal to break out in a golden flood. Canvassers, alas, discovered no such constituency. They found on the contrary and to their surprise that the entire prosperous citizenry of America were, when appealed to for money, already affiliated in some way with a church for which they felt definite responsibility. The enterprise overreached itself before it had fairly begun and left its surveys, its office furnishings, its staff of workers, its disillusionments and a crushing debt to its denominational constituents. It is to be put to the very great credit of American churches and churchmen that the debts were paid. There have been no crusades of that sort since.

## v

There had been all along little crusades—against and for. Against: the “tango,” scanty and diaphanous women’s garmenture, bathing costumes, rouge, lipstick (since the time of Isaiah, women’s toilet tables have tried the prophets), jazz, Sunday movies, Sunday motor rides, a “pleasure-mad age,” divorce, the difficult ways of the young. For: longer skirts and sleeves, the natural complexion, more sedate manners and more defensible morals, increased church attendance, increased contributions, annuities for relieved ministers, special interests and causes. Crusades for increased church attendance conceived, among other things, a “Go-to-Church Sunday.” An entire city would be urged to go to church (say) Sunday, October the 13th. If only the public, at large, it was felt, could be brought to savor a church service or two its appetite therefor would be increased. Stores were placarded, trolley cars carried an exhortation, the press was kind, the choir

added an extra anthem and the minister gave unusual attention to his message which was likely to set out the value of the churches to their community and their need of support.

Even the critics of the churches have never questioned their influence; any cause to which they gave their support received a most desirable reinforcement. Crusaders, about this time, began to ask for a Sunday upon which some laudable cause would be presented to an entire community (with or without an offering—though an offering was preferred). The Anti-Saloon League used this method with great effectiveness. It was the outstanding agency of the churches for political action in legislation against the liquor traffic. The gradual entrance of the churches into the field of direct political action during the period here considered is a study in itself. Their support could always be counted upon for legislative action against gambling, lotteries, prostitution or other definite social evils. The "crusading" spirit gradually built up organizations to carry on such campaigns which though not official church agencies represented a church constituency and reached public opinion through the use of church pulpits. "Civic leagues" or the like in many American cities took this form, also various reform associations. These began to bring direct pressure upon legislative bodies and directed the "church vote" for or against candidates. Their power grew very great. They functioned in no field more unitedly or effectively than in their demand for anti-liquor legislation.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century the "temperance cause" supplied the churches, perhaps, their major crusade. It took changing forms but had a constant at the core of it; total abstinence from the use of alcohol and every possible limitation of the traffic. Church opinion could be relied upon in any legislation for the regulation of the liquor traffic and always pushed such control to the full limit of supporting public opinion—sometimes farther. They demanded

and supported local option and extended its administrative units.

As long as national prohibition was a partisan issue, church public opinion was divided. In the North, especially, the traditional alignment of evangelical Protestantism with the Republican Party influenced the church vote strongly. The forces which finally ratified the Eighteenth Amendment were so complex as to make any analysis of them difficult. One ought not to say that national prohibition was exclusively a church crusade. The most effective arguments as one remembers them were economic. Manufacturers then in the flush of a great productive period wanted sober workmen. Alcohol, it was held, and a machine age were incompatible. If a man were too drunk to know whether he was driving or not his horse might be trusted to get him home. Similar confidence in an automobile was likely to be tragically misplaced. Also the saloon was under attack as a machine-gun nest for political corruption. Those who charge prohibition, for good or ill, against the churches exclusively forget a good many things. But it certainly commanded the general approval of the churches and could not have been successfully carried through without the church vote.

## VI

On the fourteenth of February, 1892, Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst<sup>8</sup> preached an epoch-making sermon. He began by reminding his congregation that they were the salt of the earth commissioned to save society from putrefaction. The salt, he stated quite incisively, was losing its savor and the world was going rotten; at least "the particular part of the world that it is our painful privilege to live in." The sermon developed into an indictment of the Tammany Hall controlled

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<sup>8</sup> Pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, and at that time President of the Society for the Prevention of Crime.

administration of the City of New York which surprised and pained an organization not easy either to surprise or pain. Parkhurst had a gift of plain cutting speech backed up by courage to use it unsurpassed in his generation.

He spoke, he said, on the authority of "one of our most trustworthy journals," but he added his own knife edge. New York was "rum-besotted and Tammany-debauched." The district attorney was either, he alleged, so wise in his knowledge of corruption that he did not like to touch it or so innocent that he "ought not to be allowed to go abroad after dark without an escort"; the average police captain would not disturb a criminal of means if he could help it. The system itself must be attacked; it was a partnership with evil, "every effort that is made to improve character in this city . . . is a direct blow between the eyes of the major and his whole gang of drunken and lecherous subordinates."<sup>9</sup>

Few sermons have had so much attention from the press. Every note was sounded, from entire approval to sorrow that a "man of God" had wandered so far from the charitable ways of the gospel. Tammany itself was injured innocence crossed with moral indignation. Parkhurst had "libeled"—they were not quite sure what. At any rate a grand jury would prove an admirable smoke screen and he was officially rebuked. He thereafter consolidated his strategic position by an accumulation of damning facts and a month later supplemented his pulpit Bible and hymn books with "a copious package of affidavits." The Psalms—which are treasures of texts for about every emotion and situation—supplied a text: "The wicked walk on every hand, while the vilest men are exalted." He addressed his peroration to Tammany: "For four weeks you have been wincing under the sting of a general indictment and

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\* *Our Fight with Tammany*, Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, D.D., Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1895, pages 8 *et seq.* This section is based on Dr. Parkhurst's narrative.

have been calling for particulars. This morning I have given you particulars, two hundred and eighty-four of them. Now what are you going to do with them?"

What followed is a part of the municipal history of New York City and no inconsiderable chapter in the history of the state. A legislative investigation was initiated, a reform mayor elected and the city cleaned house. Certain features of public immorality have never since been so shamelessly conspicuous. Dr. Parkhurst's stimulating example and the general character of American municipal government started an era of clerical crusading against vice, crime and their unholy political affiliations. No crusader has, however, been able to wield Dr. Parkhurst's sword nor has any other political organization than Tammany so appealed to the popular imagination as the horned and hooved incarnation of the Adversary.

An account of these movements would make a vivid chapter.<sup>10</sup> They have supplied the earnest-minded ministry occasions for supporting very necessary reforms, they have supplied clerical lovers of publicity desirable occasions for getting their names into print. Bootlegging, gangsters and racketeering have furnished them new and challenging evils for attack. During the winter of 1931 and 1932 (for example) the perennial situation in Manhattan started new investigations and a heady warfare between the governor of New York, the state legislature and such successors of Parkhurst as John Haynes Holmes and Rabbi Stephen Wise.<sup>11</sup> The "red lights" were gone, but the security boxes of officials were still full of inter-rogative money. It is difficult to say how far church crusades against municipal vice and corruption have ever reached and changed the polluting source of it all—one can only express

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<sup>10</sup> It would need to be documented from the local press of the nation—a colossal undertaking.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Parkhurst smelled the battle from afar and sent down his maledictions to Tammany from Lake Placid.

the pious, and paradoxical, hope that without them things would have been much worse.

## VII

Some of these movements were local, some nation-wide. Some of them had their little day and ceased to be, being expressions of the temper of the time. They lent light and color to the religious scene, reinforced the higher issues of society and dramatized the fight between light and darkness. There were other movements of a quieter sort, more persistent and more pervasive, which associated the American churches with European church life and Oriental student life. No account of recent American church history is complete without some reference to its international alignments. They are not easy to trace—for they involve, to begin with, some consideration of the association of religion in America with nationalism—a relation which after the war began to show strains and which has always and inescapably colored the American religious mind.

The Roman Catholic Church has made what adjustments it could with nationalism and such concessions thereto as it deemed wise, but it has never surrendered the assertion of its own essential sovereignty. The action of this long-sustained conflict has been uneven but, on the whole, the Catholic Church has within the last two generations regained both lost ground and prestige. Now, as in the dissolution of the Roman Empire, the vision of a Church unshaken amidst shaken economic orders and dissolving religious beliefs has contributed in no small degree to the renaissance of Catholicism.

Protestantism has been far more intimately tied up with nationalism. It became, predominantly, in the British Empire, Germany and the Scandinavian countries a state-church. It anointed kings at their coronations, remembered them in its prayers, and loyally acclaimed them in its hymns. The ene-



mies of the king were its enemies and their confusion was sought from the throne of Divine Grace—

“Confound their politics  
Frustrate their knavish tricks  
On Thee our hearts we fix,  
God save us all!”

The frame of all this was changed in America through the absence of a state-church; the essential spirit has not only been continued but in some way intensified. The American churches have consistently reflected the changing phases of American policy and public opinion in international affairs. The interweaving of their own histories with general American history heightened their patriotism. Such communions as found freedom from persecution or unusual opportunity in the New World, so associated their religion and patriotism as to make it occasionally difficult to distinguish between them.

The spiritual—or genealogical—descendants of the Pilgrim fathers sang, “My Country, ’tis of thee” with a prideful sense of possessing the hymn, the country and even their “Fathers’ God.” The monopolistic phrase “God’s country” about summed up the attitude of the “man in the street” when he went to church, war, or Europe. American distrust of Europe has a deep historical rooting and church people have shared it. The Protestantism of the native-born American has accentuated his distrust of the non-Protestant alien. The two “100% American” movements since 1890—the American Protective Association and the Ku Klux Klan—have been largely “church-member” movements. Race prejudice combined with Nordic nationalism in America further to complicate the complex of patriotism and introduce another strain. All this has furnished and furnishes still a background without which the strength and limitations of international Christian movements in America cannot be understood. These move-

ments have passed through three phases: the first benevolent and idealistic; the second woven through the sanguinary fabric of the World War; the third disillusioned, reconstructive and seeking first of all a formula for world peace.

## VIII

Protestant international Christian relations have naturally grown out of the contact of sympathetic organizations and the extension to some common meeting-place of international religious interests. The Catholic Church possesses within its own organization a machinery for the convocation of councils or the assembling of bishops or cardinals from the ends of the earth. Protestantism has had to create its own proper international association. The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations have international organizations. There are in addition the international contacts of foreign missionary societies, the world peace foundations and the federated councils of America and Europe. Altogether these constitute a really great machinery<sup>12</sup> with imposingly capitalized names, offices, presidents and vice-presidents, general or executive secretaries and budgets.

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<sup>12</sup>Dr. Charles S. Macfarland, former General Executive Secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, supplies, in an appendix to his book, *International Christian Movements*, Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1924, a directory of international and interchurch organizations. These include the federations and councils of the United States, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, China and Japan, The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, The (then) World Conference on Faith and Order, Central Bureau for Relief of the Evangelical Churches of Europe, International Missionary Council, Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, American Bible Society, World Sunday School Association, World Christian Endeavor Union, World Student Christian Federation, The Salvation Army, World Brotherhood Federation, Alliance of Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System, Baptist World Alliance, Lutheran World Convention, Ecumenical Methodist Conference, International Congregational Council, Lambeth Conference, Commissions of the Federal Council on International Justice and Goodwill, Relations with Religious Bodies in Europe and the Eastern Churches, The World Committee of the Y. M. C. A., the World Committee of the Y. W. C. A., The National Board of Y. M. C. A., The Church Peace Union, The World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, American Friends Service Committee, American and Foreign Christian Union, American McAll Association; I have omitted two or three organizations which are subdivisions or variants.

The international secretaries are mostly in London or New York. New York is predominantly their capital city, and America has furnished the outstanding executive groups. Among these are men of high international recognition in the quest for world peace and brotherhood. They have, in a measure, specialized. John R. Mott has been a name to conjure with for three decades in international student Christian enterprises, especially in the Orient. There his name became a synonym for superlative excellence in effective public address. When a young man had spoken with unusual clarity and power, he was said to have "Motted." Mott added to command of assemblies the vision and technique of a statesman. President Wilson sought him (in vain) for minister to China. Dr. Robert E. Speer has been—and is still—associated with the missionary work of his own communion and the missionary work of Western Christendom. He, too, has combined an unusually appealing gift of public speech with creative judgment, capacity for organization and deep sincerity. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of Mott and Speer upon the college youth of America and students throughout the world in the first decades of the twentieth century. Bishop Charles H. Brent was the initial mover of the Lausanne Conference.

The Rev. Sidney L. Gulick labored earnestly for a better understanding, during the critical period, with Japan and was, therefore, accused of being in the pay of the Japanese government or general staff or whatever other authority was willing to spend good golden yen to mislead American opinion. The Rev. William Pierson Merrill has toward the end of the period come into a position of strong international influence. The Rev. Frederick Lynch directed the Church Peace Union with the Rev. Henry A. Atkinson for an associate. Dr. Charles S. Macfarland coordinated an astounding variety of enterprise with rare executive capacity from the New York offices of the Federal Council.

The more general support of these enterprises has been assumed by men and women who have had time and disposition to attend meetings in distant regions and, maybe, enough money to pay their own traveling expenses. All these movements have been more largely financed from America than any other source. They have represented the generous and messianic attitude of American Protestantism toward less favored nations and peoples. They have reflected also the confidence of their period in the saving power of super-organization, and have afforded incidentally a pleasant and colorful occupation to men with some genius for their promotion. The religious and philanthropic cosmopolitan has been the creation of the last forty years. They have, however, at the sound core of them, unselfishly sought and served a more friendly world order.

## IX

The scheme of operation has been much the same for all groups and movements with, of course, characteristic marginal variations. The American Bible Society has been in action for one hundred and sixteen years (the British and Foreign Bible Society is twelve years older). These societies serve between them forty-seven regions, nations and provinces besides Great Britain and the United States. They have translated the Bible into nine hundred and eighteen spoken languages and dialects.<sup>18</sup> They have created grammars, dictionaries and even alphabets for illiterate and unorganized tongues and dialects to make such translations possible, and so rendered

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<sup>18</sup> Some of these languages are now obsolete. In a few the Scriptures were prepared principally for philological purposes. The whole Bible has been printed in 172 languages, the New Testament in 179 more, and portions, consisting of at least one book, in about 470 more. From 1920 to 1930 some portion of the Bible has appeared in a new language at the rate of one in four weeks. The British and Foreign Society has been the chief producer; the American Bible Society next. These facts and figures by the courtesy of the American Bible Society.

the study of languages a service which scholarship has gratefully acknowledged.

Their colporteurs carry the "Word" to the most remote regions, are paid for in every kind of money—or not at all. In 1930 the American Society issued 12,035,113 copies of the Bible, New Testaments and other portions of the Scriptures. One of the most gracious services of the Society is the publication of the Bible in Braille for the blind. The American Bible Society is a membership organization governed by an interdenominational Board of Managers. It is supported by gifts, membership dues, bequests and to a degree by the sale of its literature. It is naturally most intimately associated with all Protestant foreign missionary enterprises and with them constitutes the old historic right wing of international Christian movements. The World Sunday School Association should be added to this group. It apportions areas, distributes literature and maintains a personnel of secretaries in the Far East, Latin America and parts of Europe. It also serves as liaison officer between many international religious interests.

The Christian Endeavor Society was the bequest of Francis E. Clark and the sober eighties to Protestantism. It was the first religious "youth movement" since the children's crusade, but the flame of it was of so godly, righteous and sober a quality as to offer less flaming maturity no concern. The simplicity of its organization and its evangelical, non-sectarian spirit gave it an unexpected appeal, and the period was ripe for it since the churches generally had been strangely blind to the religious potentiality of youth and had, too largely, looked upon their young people as promising material for conversion and appointed subjects for discipline and restraint. The growth of it up to 1900 was phenomenal; it was a flame in the quick, wide spread of it. It was interdenominational at home and abroad, missionaries found it useful; it wove its bright web around the world; its general conventions assembled

thousands of young people, and even sophisticated New York took friendly and somewhat astonished notice of them.

The turn of the century marked the peak of the movement. Shrewd denominational leaders capitalized the idea for their own denominational interests and thus actually checked a movement which had in it great promise of interdenominational reconciliation. Subtle changes in the temper both of youth and religion also arrested its growth. Its original limitation of "self-expression" to pledged "testimony" and prayer was probably too narrow, though it ought to be said in justice to its leaders that they greatly widened that. Also the average age of Christian Endeavorers rapidly increased through the congenital inability of maturity to let youth alone. It did train a generation of the devout in the exercises and expressions proper to a mid-week meeting. As they have begun to be supplanted by another generation, the prayer meeting has gone with them.

X

The World Student Christian Federation came upon the world stage, then bright with idealisms, in 1895. The lights were darkened from 1914 to 1918. When they were re-lighted, almost the entire generation of the youth who had dreamed so greatly had shown that they knew how to die bravely and left the nations stripped bare of their best. The Federation sought to unite Student Christian movements all over the world and extend "the Kingdom of Christ throughout the whole world."<sup>14</sup>

The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations initiated the movement, but later—and wisely—permitted it to take a pretty independent line. The Federation has recognized national autonomy and met and resolved the complexities of race, temper, situation and tradition involved

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<sup>14</sup> Macfarland, *op. cit.*, page 63.

fully as well as the planet has managed other aspects of its entangled affairs and with a more generous and defensible idealism. During the war the Federation did a humane work for the prisoners of war, financed generously by the College Campuses of America. After the war it took up student relief in Europe and the Near East. It has, since the war, extended itself throughout the universities of the world and it now exists in more than thirty countries.

It had in 1930 a membership of 300,000 students and professors, and twenty-three national student movements were affiliated with it.<sup>15</sup> It serves an ever-changing constituency and has, therefore, "to restate its message to every new generation of students, to express in their own terms the vital questions confronting them. It is . . . the expression of their search for truth." It does not seek to force the student mind of one race or land into a single mold. The roll call of its "movements"—its very work expresses the adventurous fluidity of its spirit—is the roll call of the nations. Its leaders are among the most open-minded of the friends of youth in the region of Christian idealism. No literature I have used in this study opens more assuring vistas.

The main line of its work, as Mr. Miller states it, is to facilitate "the flow of ideas and creative movements between the different national and racial groups." Its representatives meet each year a small group of Catholic priests in Europe. The Federation maintains a Catholic Secretary in Vienna; it is in affiliation with the Russian Orthodox movement. In a world entangled in inherited and antagonistic fixations, this quiet weaving of a fabric of trust, understanding and high purpose among those with whom rests whatever hopeful future we have is of the very spirit of Christianity.

The Salvation Army has always been international in its

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<sup>15</sup> *Building Bridges*, World Student Christian Federation, 13 Rue Calvin, Geneva, Switzerland, 1930. I acknowledge, gratefully, help and literature from Francis P. Miller, Chairman.

vision; it has never considered anything human alien to itself. Nothing in the sad waste of the rags and sediment of humanity has been too earth-soiled or morally tainted for its soldiers to touch and try to lift and cleanse. It maintains a vast redemptive machinery, has open arms for the child without a father, the mother who bore him, the poor, the drifting human atoms of great industrial cities and the aged. Its workers live with lepers and use what comfort throws away to serve those whom power and wealth have forgotten. It escaped entirely the recriminations and accusations to which other forms of religious relief and morale work were subject directly after the war. The little groups blowing their brasses, beating their drums, challenging the carelessness of city streets with prayer and testimony do not indicate, unless one should look behind them, the reach and solidity of the Army's work. The Army offers more nearly the equivalent of the Catholic Orders to serve poverty and disease than anything else in Protestantism.

## XI

All the outstanding American denominations belong to some form or another of world denominational fellowship. There is a Presbyterian World Alliance, a Baptist World Alliance, International Lutheran Council, an Ecumenical Methodist Conference, an International Congregationalist Council, the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican and Episcopal Churches. These august bodies function according to the disposition and ecclesiastical organizations of their communions. Where there is centralized authority their decisions carry authority, otherwise they save their constituent parts from national isolation, promote mutual understanding, and seek through shared counsel light upon the enterprises of the soul or the Church or society. Their secretaries correspond widely and confer inquiringly, nor should a light touch underestimate the actual value of such constant and extensive contacts.



International conferences or councils furnish the high points for all these bodies. These meetings are held on an average about every ten years. They are likely to alternate between England and the United States, though the Baptists met in 1923 in Stockholm and the Lambeth Conference is always in London. Some such world conferences are organized also by the Sunday school interests, the missionary boards or bodies, the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. and the student federations.

No such gathering within the period appeals more to the discerning imagination than the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928. Its 200 delegates assembled on the Mount of Olives and lived together as Christian brethren. Ninety-one of them were from missionary areas; forty-four nations and peoples were represented from all the continents and the Pacific Islands. The delegates included among them learning, devotion and Christian statesmanship. The addresses delivered and subjects considered covered every phase of the Christian enterprise and at the most strategic points. They fill eight short volumes. Non-Christian religions were sympathetically considered and the conference illustrated the sincerity of its purpose by the graces of its fellowship.

It kept Good Friday along the roads that Jesus trod beneath the weight of His Cross. It adopted its resolutions "on the Mount of Olives and in sight of Calvary." It met the light of Easter morning with prayer and praise in sight of the domes of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. There have been few gatherings of His followers in which their Master, who used the footpaths they used and spent His hour of travail in the garden down upon which they looked, would have felt himself more at home or found a more sincere desire for the sovereignty of His Way and Truth and Life among all men.

In general the organization of all these gatherings is the same; an anticipatory period of careful preparation, the formulation of programs and agenda, the appointment of delegates, the choice of bright, particular stars as speakers and a great business of publicity in their official organs. Very often they charter a liner and fill it up with delegates quite agreed about the importance of the expedition but not always content with the staterooms assigned them. They set sail of a summer day in the happy anticipation of combining foreign travel with spiritual service, are graciously entertained by the city or region which enjoys that delightful but somewhat demanding privilege and has already given time and care—and money—in getting ready for them. They listen to many addresses, comment upon their relative excellencies, pass appropriate resolutions and separate for further travel having at least done something toward creating an international mind and establishing new bonds of international good-will.

Such meetings have rarely failed of late to consider, in one aspect or another of it, the challenge to their enterprises and ideals offered by a wholly different form of association to which the nations had long been devoted and for which in the first decade of the twentieth century they were making very carefully considered and costly preparation. The churches felt with deepening apprehension how all these meetings of theirs with their fine expression of friendly sentiment and the ends they sought lay at the mercy of war. The actions and reactions of the churches to this final and tragic form of internationalism is a chapter in itself—and still unfinished.

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NOTE—Dr. Charles S. Macfarland, Secretary Emeritus of the Federal Council, has read the chapter on Crusades and suggests that the movements considered in the last part of the chapter are international in character and ought not to be presented as strictly American. That criticism is just; the incongruity is due to a telescoping of two chapters to shorten the book. As originally written, a chapter on The International Church was to follow the chapter on Crusades.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CHURCHES AND WORLD PEACE

THE churches, as organizations, took no very definite part in the agitation for world peace until about 1890.<sup>1</sup> I do not find "church" in the exhaustive indexes of either Devere Allen's *The Fight for Peace* or Kirby Page's *National Defense*.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that there was no concern for peace among American Christian idealists. Three peace movements were organized independently in America in 1815; one in New York, one in Ohio, one in Massachusetts under the leadership of Noah Worcester and William Ellery Channing. These societies between them represented the devout for whom war is the negation of religion, the Friend for whom it is the negation of the teachings of Jesus and the intellectual idealist for whom it is the negation of any reasonable conduct of the human enterprise.<sup>3</sup> The American Peace Society was organized in 1828 through the union of more than thirty state and local societies. Some organized endeavor for international peace had thus been in action in America for one hundred and two years when the United States entered the World War. It had in general taken the line all such pioneer causes have had to

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<sup>1</sup>This should be qualified, but not much. The Presbyterian Church, for example, officially disapproved of the Mexican War.

<sup>2</sup>*The Fight for Peace*, Devere Allen, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1930. *National Defense*, Kirby Page, Farrar and Rinehart, New York, 1931.

<sup>3</sup>In re: Christianity vs. war the "free churches" in their condemnation of war have generally been in advance of the state churches. The smaller and sometimes rather extreme "sects" have been in advance of the larger denominations. The plea for tolerance in religion which is historically associated with the condemnation of war began after the Reformation in the radical groups of men without a church and often without a country. These men suffered dreadfully at the hands of their religious contemporaries, but time has been on their side, and their real service to political and religious liberty as well as to a very noble conception of Christianity is now generally recognized. (See *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Rufus M. Jones, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1914.)

follow. It had to create new minds and new idealisms, clarify the issues involved, attain a working measure of unity in its own ranks, frame a practical program, time itself to similar movements in other countries, secure some measure of reinforcement through legislation and governmental international action and endure through it all the counter-offensive of tenacious human instincts, themselves supported by the pride and power of militant nationalism.

But these movements, apart from the Society of Friends, were carried on entirely by individuals and groups who needed rather belligerent spirits themselves to maintain their cause against an indifferent or hostile society. The war against war was carried on upon a front of controversy. Letters to the press, pamphlets and the like were the usual weapons, mostly signed—or issued—over pen names which assumed a popular familiarity with Latin probably unjustified; “Pacifactor,” “Philo-pacis,” “Eirenikus” and other nineteenth century citizens of the classic world were much in evidence.<sup>4</sup> The American Peace Society published *The Harbinger of Peace*, Dr. Noah Worcester wrote a *Solemn Review of the Custom of War* which had a wide circulation, was translated into many languages and represented “the platform of the great body of American peace workers for a century.”

For the most part these pioneers took no extreme position—except that in their time any condemnation of war as a system was an extreme position. They anticipated the Kellogg Pact in justifying self-defense, though one sanguine apologist hoped that offensive war might be prevented by measures which would render self-defense quite unnecessary. These pilgrims toward peace had not yet learned that every war is, in the guileless opinion of those who wage it, a defensive war. By 1830, however, “Pacificus,” under the imprint of the

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<sup>4</sup> Allen, *The Fight for Peace*, Chapter XVI, *passim*.

Society's Executive Committee, took the advanced position that any war whether offensive or defensive is unchristian and wrong. "Pacifcus" also held that the toleration of defensive warfare would perpetuate "the monster war" till the "final conflagration."<sup>5</sup> In 1837 the Peace Society joined Pacifcus; it asserted that all national wars are inconsistent with Christianity, including those supposed or alleged to be defensive. But the Peace Society was not the Christian Church.

## I

The second quarter of the nineteenth century was, as Allen notes,<sup>6</sup> heaving and bubbling with the ferment of humanitarianism. England was beginning to take her colonial slavery in hand and the even more unhappy servitude of her mine and mill labor. America, particularly in and about Boston and Central New York, took everything in hand. Brook Farm tried an experiment in communal labor and Oneida Community tried an experiment in extremely communal domestic relations. The abolitionist declared war on Negro slavery, the temperance advocate on alcohol and the peace movement was caught in it all. It not only suffered through the inevitable differences of opinion held and vigorously expressed by the men and women—some of them of great distinction—who constituted the radical left wing in American society, but it gained an unpopular notoriety through its association with the extreme and eccentric. It has not yet entirely escaped that reproach.

The Mexican War supplied all the peace societies, radical and conservative, their first actual test outside convention halls, though the issue between pacifism and militarism was not clean cut. Sectional and political issues were involved, the farsighted saw a more portentous conflict behind Buena Vista and the heights of Monterey. Lowell was anything but a non-

<sup>5</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, pages 380 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, page 394. Allen adds that Tolstoy was later to be strongly influenced by the "Declaration."

resistant but he hated the Mexican War and said so in ways which seventy years later would have sent him to Leavenworth Federal Prison. The American Peace Society in 1846 raised a question which was eventually in the Seymour-Macintosh case to be carried to the Supreme Court of the United States: "That all good men should repudiate the doctrine which requires us to support our government right or wrong in any war."<sup>1</sup>

The resolution was lost (ten to one) but like Banquo's ghost it would not down. How and where and whether its citizens go to church may be immaterial to a government but if the state declares war it is imperative that its citizens fight. When Christianity challenges that article in the creed of nationalism, it has challenged the sovereignty of the state at its most sensitive point. For the last eighty years that impasse has haunted the consciences of the ultra-sensitive, the committee rooms of church councils where adroit resolutions on war and peace have been drawn and the administrators of the state.

The American Peace Society, in 1846, saved itself from extreme positions, the Mexican War ran its course, those who opposed it suffered no other disability than the sense of their own powerlessness to affect public opinion, the American flag waved over the "once gorgeous seat of the Montezumas" and the curtain began to rise upon the drama of the American Civil War. There was no wisdom in the leaders of both sections to prevent that tragedy. The peacemakers, divided among themselves, had a little wisdom but no power.

Elihu Burritt proposed compensated emancipation. He would sell the public lands and use the proceeds to buy the slaves. The government finally decided to give the land away and free the slaves with the blood of its ardent youth. Compensated emancipation obtained more support than is common-

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, page 413.

ly recognized.<sup>8</sup> But it was proposed twenty years too late. The Civil War was carried on with the blessing of the churches on both sides. Some of them had in fact set the first examples of dissension. The strained bonds which Lincoln hoped might not be broken gave way first before the Christian altar. Because it seemed to be fought to free the slave, the war became, for the devout of the North, a holy war (and for the devout of the South the defense of their hearthstones and altars). In the North Henry Ward Beecher was its prophet, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was its song of praise—"Our God" was marching on.

## II

The Civil War bequeathed to the North the political and civil corruption which is always included in one of the codicils to the last will and testament of any great war, proper organizations to perpetuate its memories, its comradeships and its passions. It left the South a legacy of poverty and proud, bitter recollection; it left the cause of peace an illustration, whose significance would eventually be recognized, of how wrong a way war is to do even a right thing, and it left a sad and disillusioned remnant of peace advocates the task of rebuilding their almost ruined house.

They began with a more sober judgment, less expectation of an immediate millennium and a purpose which had been tempered in fire. Nothing much came of it for two decades. The nation was very busy getting very rich, the churches were very busy "building two a day," the social moral sense of American society lay dormant, and the "balance of power" (though portentously disturbed by the Franco-Prussian War) seemed sufficient to maintain the European *status quo*.

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<sup>8</sup> James Ford Rhodes' *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1895, Vol. III, pages 269, *et. seq.* Rhodes is inclined to make the South responsible for the scant consideration the plan received, but the North and the militant abolitionist were equally at fault.

America looked at a moderately armed Europe as a distant and alien world, useful to import cheap labor from and, through contrast, to brighten the pacific virtues of the Great Republic.

Peace did, a little later, get into politics. The "Alabama Claims" were settled by arbitration in 1872. Liberal Republicans put a cautious peace plank in their platform and nominated Horace Greeley to commend it to the nation. Four years later the National Prohibition Party demanded provision for arbitration in all treaties thereafter negotiated. In 1874 a House resolution authorized the President to negotiate "for the establishment of an international system whereby matters in dispute between different governments . . . may be adjusted by arbitration and, if possible, without recourse to war."<sup>9</sup> This failed of concurrent action in Congress.

All this may seem unrelated to what the churches did or left undone. It does, I believe, represent the general attitude of Christian public opinion in America. The peace movements were carried on by church laymen and women and (fewer) clergymen, but in general it lay to one side of the dominant interests of the churches and outside their dominant convictions. Preachers have, on the whole, rather extended themselves in war-time sermons. The Old Testament was always there to supply militant texts, the heady emotions war engenders warmed the atmosphere and made eloquence easy, patriotism was a virtue, the causes were always holy and "Our God" was marching on. The appeal to sacrifice and courage, which is always the star-dust to touch with splendor the stark realism of a battlefield, linked war to central appeals of Christianity and was not alien to the Cross itself. It is a strange, entangled affair.

The four Gospels with their disconcerting teaching were of course always there also; but they seemed to belong to an-

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Allen, *op. cit.*, page 127.



other difficult and, perhaps, dangerous order whose realization was indefinite. The emotional rather trusted Matthew Arnold's "Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness" (always a convenient Power), the more conservative despaired of any realization at all until the Second Coming of Christ; the majority hoped for the best and trusted the government. Dominant public opinion, party platforms, administration policies have usually been a better register of the actual attitude of good churchmen than the resolution of church bodies or the findings of church commissions.

## III

War, unless it be civil, is distinctly an international affair, and an effective concern for peace would seem to be also an international affair, though the American mind, secular or religious, has been reluctant to believe and act on that principle. By the end of the century, however, peace began to be an international concern. The first international peace conference (of any importance) since 1853 was held at Paris in 1889 with American delegates in attendance. Similar conferences were held annually until 1913. These gave a standing to the peace cause which made it safe and even virtuous to profess an interest in it, and the churches were drawn into what seemed a rising current strong in promise.

The Spanish-American War (which really belongs to the period considered here) did not interrupt our participation in the quest for world peace though it involved the American churches in inconsistencies. They went along with it wholeheartedly. It was easy to idealize since it was in the beginning a crusade for Cuban freedom and was seen when it was over to have been an affair with "manifest destiny." A few preachers, the secretary of the American Peace Society and a minority of citizens stood against the war but a turbulent public opinion, influenced by a new force in American public

life—a screaming-headline, war-at-any-price press—carried the emotions of the country headlong.<sup>10</sup>

Two dramatic naval battles helped. The war was short and registered few casualties save through disease. Its malodorous scandals and revelations of administrative incompetence were unpleasant but not fatal. It made Theodore Roosevelt and Admiral Dewey and bequeathed to the Navy Department a heated controversy. Public opinion presently unmade Dewey in a way to leave him wondering what it was all about; Roosevelt stayed in the limelight—and America had given hostages to fortune in newly gained Pacific possessions.

A stiff-necked minority formed the Anti-Imperialist League and fought a good rear-guard action which Senator Hoar of Massachusetts led with great distinction. Their cause was lost before they began. Rudyard Kipling wrote the "White Man's Burden," and for a season it became the battle hymn of the Republic. The reluctance of the Filipinos to have the white man add their burden to his own only stimulated the general eagerness to carry the "little red schoolhouse" to "so benighted a people" and "Christianize them as our fellowmen for whom Christ also died." Protestant churches generally supported the administration with an evangelical fervor.<sup>11</sup> In addition the Islands were believed to offer great commercial possibilities and their value as a naval base was unquestioned.

Four months after the declaration of the Spanish-American War (August 24, 1898) Count Mouravieff, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, placed in the hands of all foreign representatives at St. Petersburg an historic document. The document recited the evils which Western civilization was suf-

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<sup>10</sup> For a strongly drawn indictment of the Administration see *The Epic of America*, Adams, pages 335 and 336.

<sup>11</sup> The writer was in Massachusetts during this period. His church was indulgent enough to allow him to speak as an anti-imperialist but never for a moment took it—or him—seriously. When the issue was at its tensest the majority of the State Conference of the Massachusetts Congregational Churches were against the movement, and Massachusetts was its center of strength.

fering through an already crushing and always increasing burden of armament and urged the imperative duty "of all states to put some limit to these increasing armaments, and to find means of averting the calamities which threaten the whole world. Deeply impressed by this feeling, His Majesty, the Emperor, has been pleased to command me to propose . . . a conference to discuss this grave problem."<sup>12</sup>

The motivation of this communication has been variously explained. Since the curtain has fallen upon the tragedy of the Romanoffs, the kindest view is that the Czar of all the Russias had just then a gleam of common sense and asked Western civilization—before it was too late—to forego the stupid policies which were dragging it toward an abyss. The issues which were finally shaped through the slow and ponderous action of governments and foreign ministries are too long to quote in full. They included in substance much of what is under consideration at Geneva as this is being written. They "absolutely excluded" the political relation of states and the order of things established by treaties, all of which was very much like keeping a powder magazine inviolate and considering more guarded ways of building fires in its vicinity.

The representatives of twenty-seven sovereign states met at The Hague on the eighteenth of May, 1899. "The conference," said W. T. Stead, "represented more of the world and its inhabitants than any similar assembly that has ever been gathered together for the work of international legislation; . . . on the eve of the twentieth century the human race has begun to federate itself."<sup>13</sup> The human race thus assembled proved itself very cautious in limiting the agencies devised for its self-destruction. Steps were taken to render war somewhat more humane, standardize a code for belligerents, pro-

<sup>12</sup> *Great Britain Parliamentary Publications Russia, No. 1, 1899.* Quoted in Larned's *History for Ready Reference*, Vol. VI, pages 352 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> *The Forum*, September, 1899.

protect the rights of neutrals, prohibit (for a time) aerial bombing and forbid the use "of asphyxiating or deleterious gases." This last "declaration" was opposed by Captain Mahan (then our most distinguished naval expert) on the ground that "the United States Government was averse to placing any restriction on the inventive genius of its citizens in inventing and providing new weapons of war."<sup>14</sup> The captain also thought such gases less inhuman than submarines. He had not as yet had an opportunity to compare the relative humanity of death by drowning and death by mustard gas.

The outstanding achievement of the First Hague Conference was the creation of the Hague Tribunal for arbitration and the "Pacific Settlement of International Disputes." The convention establishing this tribunal eventually got itself signed by all the powers represented at the conference and was widely acclaimed as the dawn of a new era. The United States Circuit Court of Appeals in California decided that by virtue of the treaty the judgment of the Court of Arbitration had all the force of a federal statute. The provision that in case of a threatened dispute it should be the duty of the signatory powers to remind any one or more of themselves that the Court was open for business would, it was believed, compensate for the lack of any provision for compulsory arbitration. The churches and the Christian opinion of America rallied strongly to the support of the Court. Andrew Carnegie claimed the privilege of properly housing it, William Howard Taft spoke widely and wisely in support of it. International peace had at last become an entirely respectable cause. Churches were opened to peace meetings.

## IV

The Hague Conference received far less attention in the representative American religious publications than the return

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<sup>14</sup> *History for Ready Reference*, Vol. VI, page 364.

of Admiral Dewey from Manila, the Boer War or our own little war with the Filipinos who were irritatingly unappreciative of a "free church and a free school." The Rev. D. S. Phelan—speaking for the Roman Catholic Church in a résumé of church life in 1899<sup>15</sup>—justified them. The "looting by our soldiers of the churches in Luzon" (for which he found absolute proof) had embittered the Filipinos until they found "no honorable choice between independence and death." Dr. A. E. Dunning speaking for the Congregationalists felt on the contrary that the "results of the war with Spain have begun to be felt in a new sense of responsibility for the regions which have recently come under the control of our government. . . . The efforts to create and strengthen Christian character in our new possessions with the least emphasis on denominational relations are sure to attract increasing sympathy and support."<sup>16</sup> Reports of efforts to create and strengthen Christian character by the "water cure" were troubling a few sensitive—or suspicious—souls but Dr. Dunning represented the dominant Protestant opinion.

The churches in general—as their representatives spoke for them in this résumé—were interested in missions, doctrinal controversy, their own growth, divorce, Dr. C. A. Briggs, a new hymn book and the like. Even Rufus Jones, speaking for the Friends, reported legacies and endowments and "a decided revival of interest in historic Quakerism," but said nothing of peace—perhaps he had no need to. Reports (in the October, 1899, *Independent*) of the Pan Presbyterian Council at Washington and the International Congregational Council at Boston indicate no outstanding interest in world peace. The Presbyterians had their most heated passage on the "Bible and the New Criticism," the Congregationalists over the quality of theological education.

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<sup>15</sup> *The Independent*, January 4, 1900.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

The *Outlook* (July, 1898) considered the victory "thanksgiving service" the high point of the Triennial Congregational National Council in Portland: "The Scripture selections, the prayer and the addresses all recognized the greatness of the victories which had been won, and the gravity of the situation in which they had left the American people." The same issue of the *Outlook* had two significant editorials. In one the editor maintains "the legitimacy and necessity of war in certain cases." He documented his conclusion by the example of Jesus Christ who "when He found legalized robbery in the Temple of God did not propose arbitration nor resort to the orderly process of diplomacy but drove the robbers out by the terror of His presence. The whip of small cords was the symbol of the rightful use of force in a rightful cause." "Love," Mr. Abbott maintained, "may use force; selfishness may not." The crucial question of deciding which was the really loving belligerent was left open.

The other editorial condemns war for profit. "To commence a war for humanity and end it by a demand for profit" was not "consonant with honor." The United States should, therefore, ask no indemnity from Spain. Spain, the editorial sagaciously adds, was bankrupt anyway and could not pay an indemnity and "we certainly do not want her bonds." More recent experience has sustained "Mr. Abbott's" position about the undesirability of the bonds of the bankrupt as indemnities. The editor exhorted the nation "to set an example to the nations of the world and abolish war for private profit." War thereafter must be an affair, apparently, of unselfish love.

The *Outlook* had a vigorous editorial (May 7, 1898) on The Church and War. The clergy, the editor held, should assist the nation before it entered a war to inquire whether the war should be undertaken; after that it was the duty of the Church to maintain the morale of the nation, alleviate suffering and distress and "prevent the deterioration and demoraliza-

tion which follow in the track of even a righteous war." It would, however, the editorial declared, "be a great mistake if the clergy were to preach nothing but war sermons." Theodore Roosevelt had an article in the *Independent* (December 21, 1899) defending national expansion as the path to national glory; "the people that do not expand leave and can leave nothing behind them. It is only the war-like power of a civilized people that can give peace to the world." The stability of civilization depended upon "the power of the mighty civilized races which have not lost the fighting instinct."

A week later the *Independent* published an article on America at the Peace Conference by Holls, a member of the American delegation. The diplomats of the "old school" had considered the conference "the crowning farce of the century" but the attitude of America blew into an atmosphere "thus heavy with diplomatic miasma . . . as a refreshing northerly breeze." Result: For the first time in the history of the world, the ideas of justice and right have been agreed upon by a great representative parliament of men. The editor of the *Independent* a week later was more realistic. "The conference itself amounted to very little, but it brought out into clear light a few of the mutual suspicions of the European nations." Letters to the editor of the *Outlook* during the Cuban War reveal some dissent from the editor's opinions but Mr. Abbott (as he called himself) had American Protestantism with him. A poet spoke—as poets finally do—for the nation:

"Soon rolls the battle-smoke away;  
 Soon mercy soothes the stroke of wrath;  
 The isles will own our happier sway,  
 The sea-waves kiss the conqueror's path.  
 Be these, O Lord, our country's gain,  
 May she not bear the sword in vain."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *The Outlook*, August 13, 1898. The bulk of the *Outlook* for '98 is war articles.

I have quoted at some length from these journals because they were at that time the two outstanding undenominational religious publications in the United States and because, I believe, they registered very accurately the general attitude of the church people toward war. Their representative in ecclesiastical gatherings might pass resolutions or not; the people were behind them—but a long way. Nevertheless the Hague Conference registered. Its International Tribunal of Arbitration appealed to the imagination of the idealistic, the powerful advocacy of William Howard Taft gave it prestige and there was for the next ten years a growing concern of Christian women quite generally and laymen—more or less.

Every Secretary of State from Elihu Root to Bryan negotiated treaties of arbitration—Root twenty-five, Knox two, Bryan twenty-one.<sup>18</sup> They suffered considerable mortality in the United States Senate but they supplied additional opportunities for petition to that body and provided the peacefully minded in the churches a program to support.<sup>19</sup> The Carnegie Foundation educated and agitated and got suspected. Prizes were offered and essays written, economic considerations began to tell, arguments for peace grew more realistic, less emotional and gathered weight and there was a promising increase of organizations working for peace through education and agitation. These organizations sought to unite upon a Peace Day—preferably Sunday—when the entire nation would be appealed to.

The decade from 1904 to 1914 was electric with contradictions. The popular "monthlies" began to make public

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<sup>18</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, page 132. But see *Woodrow Wilson's Life and Letters*, Ray Stannard Baker, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1931, Vol. IV, pages 84 *et seq.* Bryan negotiated thirty treaties.

<sup>19</sup> The writer remembers the circulation of such petitions, their representative reception by church people and the personnel and attendance at "peace meetings"—more women than men and no great enthusiasm.



opinion and found new fields to exploit. An undercurrent of popular antagonism to the captains of industry and the "trusts" they captained began to make itself felt. The sagacious editors of such publications committed their enterprises to these rising tides; shamefully governed cities, over-capitalized business, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and the affinities of Congress with the tariff, "bosses," "public-be-damned" railroads, exploited franchises, interlocking directorates, extravagant insurance companies were all waiting to be exposed. There was never such a time of investigating, exposing, demanding a "new freedom" and growing righteously indignant.

A new generation of governors, senators and presidents was carried toward their appointed destinies upon these same tides. The "reformers" and the "progressive" found the people reaching out for new causes to espouse, holding up new banners with new legends for them to bear. America was in ferment again—this time it was filled with the leaven of triumphant democracy, and the churches stirred with it also. The cause of peace drove along on the same stormy tides. Roosevelt broke the blockade of Venezuela by England, Italy and Germany (then bothered about their bond holdings) by "maneuvering" the new United States Navy in the Caribbean and suggesting—according to Article XXVII of the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes—that the Permanent Court needed something to do.

A well-timed revolution in Colombia brought forth the Republic of Panama with Roosevelt acting as *accoucheur*. We built the Panama Canal and New York laughed at the "chocolate soldier." To balance the policy of "walk softly and carry a big stick," the President took the initiative in bringing representatives of Russia and Japan to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to negotiate peace. The Peace of Portsmouth left a still unbalanced account in the Far East but it won the President the Nobel Award as the most distinguished peace-

maker of the period. After which he sent sixteen new battle-ships around the world.

The tempo of events quickened. Naval competition between England and Germany strained toward the breaking point. A universal unrest possessed the nations. In America the Progressive Party set out for the promised land singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic Party had no official hymn since the one popular competitor to "Onward Christian Soldiers,"

"I don't keer if he is a houn'  
You gotta quit kickin' *my* dawg aroun',"

did not survive the Baltimore Convention—but Wilson and the Democrats captured the promised land. Martial music of a more somber sort was beginning to be heard by the chancelleries of England. Meanwhile the friends of peace were never more confident—"the age is ready for peace, the world is weary of war." The American churches shared this hope.

## VI

The tragic eclipse of these bright hopes in 1914 caught the Christian American idealist entirely unawares. Historians may make what case they can for the war guilt of the various belligerents and discount, as they feel justified, the protests of having been taken totally by surprise which came from one quarter or another. There is no doubt that the American churches were first surprised, then pained and finally carried wholeheartedly into American belligerency. The militant temper of the church people of the Atlantic seaboard and the industrial sections actually outran the expressed policy of the administration. Spokesmen for the churches—and themselves—have in the general search for alibis in respect to our entry into the World War sometimes intimated that the churches

were drawn reluctantly into the war. On the contrary they were not.

Here again there is no way of disassociating the mind of the Church from the dominant public opinion of the time. American evangelical Protestantism represents a substantial majority of the native-born Americans of British descent. They possess, among other vigorous characteristics, a way of thinking of themselves as the real America—the America of the school histories, McGuffey's readers, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," poetry, patriotism and song. They own most of the country's wealth, direct its industries and largely control directly or indirectly the organs which reflect or create public opinion. Since the Civil War their unity has been strained by the economic tensions between agrarian and industrial interests. They have been traditionally Democrats in the South and Republicans in the North—the federal elections since the Civil War have shown them to be predominantly and consistently Republican. When a major issue unites them, as in the presidential election of 1928, they assert a massive sovereignty in the control of the nation.

Their mind about any issue is the actual mind of the American churches about that issue. They respect—if they happen to know anything about them—the idealistic resolutions of their denominational assemblies, conferences and councils. They also respect their pastors or rectors, they permit their pulpits a working freedom of speech in economic, social and political regions and are as influenced thereby as can reasonably be expected in the complex action of modern society. They possess and jealously maintain the power by which English Parliaments have humbled the pride of kings, the "power of the purse" and use it in godly ways against ministers who break too far, or too tactlessly, the bounds permitted the pulpit in its relation to the more purely secular. There is no just test of their understanding and commitments to the precepts of the

Gospels save their actions and reactions in any given instance. What they have been or done is what American Christianity has been and done.

This realistic judgment must, of course, be qualified. The Christian Church does maintain its own apartness, and opposes to the generally dominant forces of its age and confidences loyalties and ideals which are its mandate to the world. Its members do become through their confession the citizens of that order of values, relationships, laws and hopes which in their entirety give to Christianity its spiritual genius, its religious significance. Their citizenship in that order is vague or strangely conceived and held according to their temper and devotion, but it has always been a force to be reckoned with and, through all their entanglement in another order, it sets its sign upon their spirits, reaches and affects the encompassing society of which they are a part.

When one undertakes justly to estimate and recite in definite statements any phase of the long and difficult affair of Christianity with what St. Paul once and for all called the "world," he needs to watch his pen. It is like trying to write the history of an embattled vision or make a chronicle of "what time in mists confounds." The timeless imponderables of the Christian faith are seen and lost and seen again.

"Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of Eternity.  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
Round the half glimpsed turrets wash again."

The "mists" washed darkly around the half-glimpsed turrets of world peace in 1914. Another trumpet sounded and other battlements became the centers of attack and defense.

VII

There is, said Burke, no way to indict a nation; it is still more difficult to document the mind of a nation. An advocate

of Diabolus—or the angels either—could by a judicious selection of material make out any case he wanted regarding the attitude of the American churches toward the World War before 1917. The mind of the Protestant churches toward the war was in practical force the mind of the America just characterized, and shared its confusions. Regional and racial inheritances and even political alignments had more influence than a detached Christian idealism. I do not believe the churches of the North Atlantic seaboard to have been consistently pacific or neutral after European mobilization.

The reaction of the sober-minded press to President Wilson's Mexican policy is as good a test as any of the church mind about the use of armed force even in a minor crisis. And this was more deflected by political passion than controlled by pure reason. The American mind was like a sea heaving with a ground swell and whipped by cross winds. The church mind as far as it was separately articulate spoke through its ministry. The pity and tragedy of war were thus voiced. There was an abundance of prayers for peace, but the clergy as a whole were not pacifists. As the issues of the battlelines shaped themselves, some of them were more belligerent than their congregations.

Successful clergymen are commonly of a vigorous and aggressive temper. Popular preaching must have an emotional content, the moral drama is the preacher's inherited theme, he tends to recast events and situations into that mold, he seizes upon whatever has captured man's interest or imagination to preach about, and restraint in speech is not always one of his cardinal virtues. The interpretations of the war which steadily prevailed in America were the British interpretations; their war was in defense of the sanctity of treaties, of violated Belgium, of the democratic tradition. They did not exactly call this the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of God—but the implications were plain. France was the traditional friend of the

United States with a sure flair for quickening our national sense of an unpaid debt.<sup>30</sup> All this fell in with the temper of the American pulpit as though it were planned for just that end—and perhaps it was.

By August 15, 1914, the *Outlook* had forecast the American position: "History will hold the German Emperor responsible for the war in Europe. . . . The people are arming to disarm the army of the Absolutist. . . . We do not undertake to interpret the will or purpose of the Almighty. But we believe . . . that God has a plan and that history is nothing but the working out of His plan in human affairs. And we believe that the Austrian Prime Minister and the German Emperor have made a fatal mistake in leaving this truth out of their reckoning in their endeavor to destroy the great democratic movement in Europe." In the same issue the editors concluded from "an international symposium" that "the contest is in its fundamental analysis between liberalism and monarchical militarism." They conclude a poll of the American press with a quotation from the *Chicago Tribune*: "It is the twilight of the kings. The republic marches east in Europe."

All this: "plan of God," "twilight of the kings," embattled liberalism, was the heart of the American gospel. The wonder is that the pulpit preserved a difficult neutrality so well and so long. During all this period the *Outlook* was strongly under the influence of Roosevelt, and its positions were probably in advance of general religious public opinion in America at any given period, but it carried with it a growing assent and reflects the course of the church mind. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, the Bryce report on Belgium "atrocities," the contagious strains of a dissevered world evoke always a more mili-

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<sup>30</sup> Page found it wise to advise the English Cabinet to allow the French to take charge of American ships carrying contraband of war.

tant note in its issues. Pacifism becomes more and more a word of sinister import. Preparedness, as yet only "against war," is imperative.

There is, in these issues, a sad sense of the entanglement of Christianity in the "deepening shadows" of the war, the hope that the war itself is bringing humanity back "to a revived sense of the unseen world." In August, 1914, the *Outlook* approved Roosevelt's San Francisco address as a needed counter-irritant to the non-resistance propaganda. The *Outlook* was impatient of Wilson's "Peace without victory," critical of his suggestion of "an international league for peace" because he believed "a permanent world peace must be a peace without victory." The *Outlook* believed that war should have been declared sooner, pacifists should be allowed to speak but they should speak in a vacuum since nobody should pay any attention to them. War must be envisaged as an awful duty: "We may cheer ourselves with the hope that, as it is the greatest, so it may be the last of the world's battles for justice, liberty and peace."<sup>21</sup>

March 21, 1917, the *Outlook* carried (as an advertisement) a "Message from the Religious Society of Friends in America to Our Fellow Citizens." The advertisement rejoices that, in a war-crazed world, there are "so many men who are judging war by moral and spiritual standards." "Might does not decide the right. . . . Nor can evil overcome evil. True national honor is a nation's own integrity and unselfish service. . . . The alternative to war is no inactivity and cowardice. It is the irresistible and constructive power of goodwill . . . unflinching good-will, no less than war, demands

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<sup>21</sup> The "Letters to the Editor," cartoons, illustrations, comments, editorials, book reviews, advertisements and the like in the *Outlook* are as representative a cross-section of American public opinion from 1914 to 1917 as could easily be found. It is all like the re-emergence of a vanished world—even some of the motor car advertisements. But I believe it represents fairly the main current of church opinion—though usually three to six months ahead of it.

courage, patriotism and self-sacrifice. . . . To such an embodiment of the matchless, invincible power of good-will this otherwise tragic hour challenges our country."

The editors called this "advertisement" fine in spirit but faulty in reasoning and repeated the same arguments used in the Cuban War. Jesus had driven the money-changers out of the temple with force; He struck down the temple police who came to arrest Him with force, "Whether the force which literally knocked them down was moral or physical, natural or supernatural, is not material—the *effect* was physical."<sup>22</sup> It is perfectly possible to chastise a wrongdoer in the spirit of love." Something like this was being preached in many pulpits—more of this was seated in the pews and it went shouting down the street outside.

No one who shared as a churchman the mind of the time can justly forget or slight the other side of the picture. There was a strong and very actual sense of sacrifice in the religious attitude toward the war. Ingenious reconciliations of the Sermon on the Mount with war probably did not count for much. Dr. Shailer Matthews was far more clear-sighted intellectually and more honest morally than the editors of the *Outlook* when he said a moratorium, for the duration of the war, would have to be declared on the essential ideals of Jesus. But the spiritually sensitive found some kinship between the soldier's sacrifice and the Cross. The Cross was again lifted against the skyline and it had to be borne.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> About this time American youth were being trained in the technique of sticking a bayonet in the other man's abdomen and twisting it. That *effect* was also physical.

<sup>23</sup> If the author's attitude has any value it was just that. He came back from a month in Canada in 1917 to his parish in Providence. He had found in Canada among the leaders of the churches there a deep quietness of spirit. He found the American spirit strained and angry. He concluded then America could not stay out of the war and save her soul. He has never since changed his opinion about that. We were caught between tragic alternatives.



## VIII

When war was finally declared, it mobilized a national temper so strained that the call to arms was really a relief. The soul of America demanded a catharsis. There had always been another way; the renunciation of all war profit, a universal ministry of human service, a pouring out of American wealth and strength for a world bleeding to death,<sup>24</sup> but that way, humanly speaking, was impossible from the first. Only war was left. The assumption of this chapter that the American clergy moved toward war as rapidly as general public opinion, and in some instances more rapidly, should be qualified by an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* (February, 1918) by the Rev. Joseph H. Odell, "Peter Sat by the Fire Warming Himself."

This article was widely read and commented upon. It indicted the American clergy for shameful spiritual lethargy "during those thirty-two months when Europe and parts of Asia were passing through Gehenna." Dr. Odell quoted a very well-written letter of Bishop Cyprian, dated the middle of the third century, the substance of which was that the Christians, "a quiet and holy people," had learned the secret of peace in "an incredibly bad world," and, though despised and persecuted, were "masters of their souls." Such a letter, Dr. Odell thought, "might have been written by any one of thousands of American prelates, bishops, dignitaries and eminent clergymen between August, 1914, and April, 1917, and its reproduction in any one of a hundred ecclesiastical periodicals would have called forth no comment."

Such an attitude, however praiseworthy in the early centuries, was reprehensible in the twentieth. The American Church had forfeited its spiritual leadership and whatever spiritual vision we had we owed to such an "unmitred and un-

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<sup>24</sup> The nations which sought American alliance would probably have been wiser, as the event has proved, to have encouraged that attitude.

ordained" priesthood as Arnold Toynbee, Lord Bryce, Rae-makers, Maurice Barres, Alfred Noyes, Owen Wister, Donald Hankey, Masefield, H. G. Wells, J. M. Beck, Frank H. Simonds, Ian Hay Beith. These "in varying degree and by variant methods brought us to the truth." If Peter had not as yet sufficiently warmed himself by the fire, this article not only warmed but scorched him. Dr. Odell's English birth may have explained in part the ardor with which he stirred the fire.

Two months later in the same magazine George Parkins Atwater said a good word for Peter. He had, it was true, stood by the fire, "confused by the calamities and obscurities and perplexities of the passing hour," but he had only been waiting for light. When the light came he was bold enough. "The clergy at this time having stood with Peter are now exemplifying his boldness." The Church had done its part. "The service flags in our churches proclaim the militant quality of our Christian manhood." Mr. Atwater had "seen a bishop in the uniform of the Red Cross and he [the bishop] had been in France too." "But, thank God . . . *the complete representative of the American Church in France is the United States Army overseas.* . . ."<sup>25</sup> The Army today is the Church in action, transforming the will of the Church into deeds, expressing the moral judgments of the Church in smashing blows. Its worship has its vigil in the trenches . . . its prayers are in its acts and its choir is the crash of cannon and the thrilling ripple of machine guns, swelling into a tornado of persuasive appeal to a nation to remember the truth: The soul (or nation) that sinneth it shall die. Our army is preaching the sermon of the American Church to Germany."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Italics as quoted.

<sup>26</sup> Just then the Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis was discussing the sterilization of 10,000,000 German soldiers, the segregation of their women and the "duty of simply exterminating the German people." *National Defense*, Kirby Page, Farrar and Rinehart, New York, 1931, page 182.

Mr. Atwater wished it had been possible for Mr. Odell "to have every war sermon preached by the clergy with the *date* of its delivery. There was a deluge."<sup>27</sup> He quoted a militant resolution passed by the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Ohio "with a shout": Peter was himself at last and his "remaining duty was to set his face against the moral iniquity, the utterly unpardonable desertion of its [the church's] cause, of concluding a peace based upon any other consideration than the complete mastery and dissipation of every evil organization or movement of government which has shown itself to be the cruel and heartless foe of humanity." Peter left instructions to "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and started for the front singing, "We won't come back till it's over, over there."

The young clergy supplied chaplaincies for all regiments and men-of-war, the older became Y. M. C. A. secretaries, directeurs des Foyers du Soldat, and Red Cross workers. A substantial percentage of the American clergy were directly in war service in Europe and Asia. The churches became centers for every kind of relief work. All their services of worship took on a war-time character. Upon great occasions the colors of the Allies were massed at the altar. As America was drawn more deeply into the war and began to pay its costs with something more than money loans to our Allies, the churches became the main agencies to keep up the morale of the nation and were used by the government for almost every expression of the fierce patriotism to which the people were, by every art, being excited. Parsons going to the front—or thereabouts—

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<sup>27</sup> For a carefully documented "anthology" of what ministers said, religious editors wrote and assemblies and the like resolved during the war see *The Church and War*, Albert R. H. Miller, The Bethany Press, 1931. Even a reticent quotation would add to these pages a very pungent content. I doubt if it would be fair. These immoderate clerical utterances were only accents of the general mind. Some of the men who were most emotionally immoderate are dead. Others have acknowledged that the currents of the time carried them away. This whole sad matter will probably be more useful to some future student of mass-hysterics than the historian of Christianity.

were generously dismissed and lovingly remembered in their adventure.

When they came home in khaki, they were received with distinction, extensively interviewed, told their stories and showed their relics. They met the accidents of war stout-heartedly. Those who were brought into the actual fighting areas shared the dangers of the fighting men with high courage.<sup>28</sup> They were wounded and gassed, some of them were killed. Clergymen who are today branded as pacifists could, if they cared, show their croixs de guerre and their citations. A clergyman who had a most distinguished war record, palms and croix de guerre, was taken severely to task by a colonel in his congregation for his advocacy of peace. "Were you across?" he asked the colonel. "No," was the answer, "I was detailed to do my war service in America." Which would seem to disprove the assertion sometimes heard that a "pacifist" is necessarily a coward.

In the post-war reactions and disillusionments one ought not, at least, to forget that the churches then sincerely believed the war a religious duty and that there was in their murky passion a very noble and saving gleam of sacrificial consecration. Peter did not escape his confusions and uncertainties when he left the fire. He was caught in the débâcle of civilization. The tireless inquiry of historians for a long decade now has uncovered a little the complexities of national policies and motivations, but there is even now no general agreement. We only know that the simple formulæ of Abbott and Odell which satisfied the Christian conscience of America were pathetically inadequate. But they were all the formulæ poor Peter had except the gospel, and a moratorium had been declared upon

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<sup>28</sup> 93 men and women died or were killed in overseas Y. M. C. A. service, 128 were wounded or gassed, 60 died in home camp service and 5 were taken as prisoners of war. Total casualties 286. *Service with Fighting Men*, Association Press, 1922, Vol. II, Appendix XII.

that. It was even doubtful if it could have legally been sent through the mails. The darkness of these years was never without its glory of star-dust—something greater than death brooded over the battlefields, the capacity of men to die for what they believed their duty and knew to be their dreams.<sup>29</sup>

## IX

When it was “over over there” (supposedly) Peter came home. He came home to the post-war reactions, to a nation still shaken by the ground swell of four cataclysmic years. He came home to political bitterness, to a nation delirious with excitement because peace had been made and sullen because peace had been made without taking Berlin. As far as he shared American public opinion he quarreled with the Versailles Treaty, not because it made a cat’s cradle of the map of Central Europe or demanded impossible reparations, but because it did not hang the Kaiser. He generally favored the League of Nations—probably his church did also until it became a political issue. Then his position became confused. Pliable Peters went, as they have always done, with their inherited political party and the dominant opinion of their section—North or South. Tactful Peters kept on believing in the League, but kept still about it. Militant Peters kept on fighting for it, but most Peters reflected the changing temper of the time. Old distrusts of Europe, old idealizations of American isolation made this easy and natural.

Extremely idealistic religious leaders condemned the League because it was “implemented,” they joined political idealists of the Borah school and played into the hands of the extreme reactionaries—Lodge and his school—and political passion seamed it all. It is probably a too dogmatic judgment

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<sup>29</sup> I find in a little anthology *War Verse*, Frank Foxcraft, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1918, the final reaction to the war in terms of spiritual idealism which might be submitted to the future as the best apology for the generation which fought it.

to say that strange alliance kept America out of the League. The historic temper of the American people slowly reasserted itself and it was against entangling alliances. The consequences have been what they have been.

The controversy between modernists and fundamentalists (to which we shall come) presently engaged the interests of the churches. For a half dozen years Peter and his flock were busy about doctrine and jazz and flaming youth and the "return to normalcy" and the engaging "bull market" which began after 1922. And yet—! For Peter with so much material in hand began to audit his accounts with war, and they troubled him. He even began to audit his accounts with the Christian gospel—the moratorium having been in a degree lifted—and that troubled him still more. He took account of the estate of his fellow Christians in Europe and he began to wonder. The Kingdom of God seemed somehow to have escaped his militant endeavors.

It should be set down to the credit of American Christianity that it sought through the Federal Council to put some of the resources of the churches at the service of the impoverished churches in Central Europe and drew no line between friend and foe.<sup>80</sup> The Alliance for World Friendship through the Churches was organized and began its healing work. The conference held at St. Beatenburg, Switzerland, under the Alliance in 1920 was probably the first general humane contact of the Christian representatives of formerly hostile nations for their common task of spiritual reconstruction.

The writer attended that conference and remembers still how difficult it was to forget embattled passions and prejudices

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<sup>80</sup>The money given was in the aggregate large, though Mr. Hoover said that American profits from purchases for Belgian relief made in this country were larger than the earlier gifts to that cause. America gave through many agencies: Red Cross, Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, Blind Children, Polish and Serbian Relief, Relief for European Churches, and others. These represent the Christian cooperation of all communions.

and how tremulously hands were stretched to meet and touch across the abyss which was so recent and had been so bloody. The churches supported, on the whole, every move made for the limitation of naval armament; they began to anticipate the limitation of land armaments. There was sporadically a renaissance of the philosophies and religious considerations which must support a thoroughgoing Christian peace movement. The Y. M. C. A. took an advanced position on social, economic and international conditions which it found hard in the face of financial pressure to maintain. The Y. W. C. A. took the same line and, on the whole, maintained it.<sup>81</sup>

## X

None of these things was easy. The war, like all wars, bequeathed the nation a new association of ex-soldiers who were always looking for post-war opportunities to keep on being belligerently patriotic. They were often more critical of peace movements than luminously intelligent as to their motivations and supporting convictions. The patriotic societies had a tradition of military patriotism and found it difficult to understand a creatively pacific patriotism. And they felt that patriotism was their especial mandate. The war bequeathed also a more subtle legacy, a consistent rationalization of militarism. That had been worked out with a completeness it had never before attained and had been driven into the very fiber of the American spirit. The fear complex was tenacious, pacifist was a name to damn by, the philosophy of militarism had generally captured the secular press.

Industrialists were anxious about their system and found means to associate pacifism (there should be a better word than

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<sup>81</sup> But see: *Message and Purpose of the Young Men's Christian Association of the U. S. A.* adopted by the National Council, August 11, 1931. This statement is inclusive but quite general in terms. It recognizes "in the deepening conviction that war is an intolerable evil 'evidences' of the working of the Spirit of God whom Jesus reveals."

that) with syndicalism, socialism and communism, these being words more useful for their purpose than any amount of argument. And there was always Russia. The Church had to rebuild its conceptions of a pacifically consistent Christianity under constant attack. Public opinion was unstable and easily influenced;<sup>32</sup> various organizations—supported largely by the fear of industrialists and to the advantage of their secretaries—made black-lists of the potential enemies of the state among whom some of its most distinguished citizens were included. Even the administration of the United States Army was supposed to have such a list.<sup>33</sup>

Peter, hindered by such opposition and disillusionment by his adventure into a region not native to his apostleship—and with an uneasy sense of having really failed his Master—began to repent. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick spoke for the penitents with probably more authority and certainly a wider hearing than any other clerical voice. "I never expect," he wrote, "to bless another war."<sup>34</sup> Dr. Fosdick's courage, restraint in utterance, faculty of telling statement and distinguished station fitted him ideally to speak for the very considerable number of Christian clergy and laity whose consciences had always been uneasy about the war.<sup>35</sup>

"We have been," he said, "morally deceived." "See," he

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<sup>32</sup> When the Women's "Peace Train" came to Detroit, the protests were vehement. The writer undertook to pray for them and found a line of policemen at the hall door. The meeting itself was as innocuous as a prayer meeting.

<sup>33</sup> For an invaluable and precisely documented study of patriotic propaganda see *Information Service* (issued by Federal Council) Vol. VII, No. 18, May 5, 1928. The "Black-lists" were considered again in the issue of November 3, 1928. These studies set out perhaps the most amazing chapter of murk, suspicion and misrepresentation, with some ignorance and more fabrication, in American history. The reader who looks it up may agree with the writer that to be black-listed was then to be singled out for a conspicuous honor.

<sup>34</sup> See his introduction to *War: Its Causes, Consequences and Cure*, Kirby Page. George H. Doran Company, New York, 1923.

<sup>35</sup> There were outside the Society of Friends men who had never gone with the war at all. Bishop Paul Jones with his Fellowship of Reconciliation, A. J. Muste, John Haynes Holmes and others who deserve for their courage and vision far more than a footnote.



said, "how modern warfare protects the weak; ten million known dead soldiers; three million presumed dead soldiers; thirteen million dead civilians, twenty million wounded, three million prisoners; nine million war orphans, five million war widows, ten million refugees. What can we mean—modern war protecting the weak?"<sup>86</sup> And he touched with a surgeon's probe the morally abnormal growth in modern civilization: "the dogma of nationalism." "That," he said, "was Christianity's most dangerous competing religion, the most dangerous rival of Christian principles on earth."<sup>87</sup> The historians helped Peter in their disentangling of the complex in which the war was really rooted.

The economist in calculating the costs of the war and exposing the delusive fallacy of the hope of ever getting them back out of Germany made Peter's congregation a little less impatient of any suggestions of a more economical way of attaining the Kingdom of God. Also a new generation of ministers was taking over the actual leadership of the Church. Many of these had seen actual war service—not a six months' Y. M. C. A. secretaryship in the less exposed areas or a heady speaking tour up and down the lines.<sup>88</sup> They knew that Mr. Atwater's idealization of a Christian service in the trenches lacked realism and omitted many elements in the actual liturgy. They knew that the "new death" (of which Winifred Kirkland had written so movingly in the *Atlantic*, May, 1918) was very much like old death invested with unimaginable horrors and that the wrong people had died. Also a new word was finding its way into American argot: "bunk" was inelegant but it satisfied a long-felt need.

<sup>86</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, page 653.

<sup>87</sup> *Christian Century*, January 19, 1928.

<sup>88</sup> Since the writer was a six months' *directeur du foyer du soldat* in 1918, he is not speaking invidiously of his clerical brethren in khaki. The poor French children in Maisongelle-Tuillerie were more exposed than the *directeur*. We all did what we could—but most of it was nothing to make heroes of ourselves about.

Such leadership has told in the official attitude of the communions. Their various commissions on peace have been strengthened, their resolutions more definitely drawn. They are united in their opposition to compulsory military education in state-supported schools. They have supported, in common with the churches and church people of other countries, all disarmament measures. They would, in the opinion of the writer, be less easily stampeded by war hysteria than formerly.

They have not, for reasons already suggested, strongly supported the League of Nations or pressed for our entrance therein, though they have supported the World Court and even demanded our entrance. There is, probably, a stronger sentiment for the League among the ministry of the churches than finds expression. Newton D. Baker has recently and very likely expressed their attitude in his own. The League is a good thing and we ought to be in it and some day we likely will be, but it is no use running for office, sacred or secular, on that platform in the year of our Lord 1932.<sup>89</sup>

## XI

The peace movement among the churches has from 1924 to 1932 taken three lines. The first a general and dependable support for all disarmament propositions—which needs no further comment. Second a sound support for the Kellogg Pact, and, third, the expressed conviction of many clergymen that “the churches of America should now go on record as refusing to sanction or support any future war.”

The initiation of the movement for the outlawing of war is credited to Salmon Oliver Levinson, a Chicago attorney. The *Christian Century* under the editorship of Charles Clayton Morrison, more than any other religious agency, won the

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<sup>89</sup> Seventy-six per cent of the faculties and students of theological seminaries in May, 1931, favored immediate entrance into the League, six per cent were opposed, eighteen per cent doubtful. *The World Tomorrow*, May, 1931.

churches to the support of the idea, and Secretary Kellogg made it an administration measure—or at least a measure of the Department of State. Senator Borah piloted it through the shoals and rapids of the United States Senate—with reservations. “What is there,” said the *Christian Century* of January 31, 1924, “the churches can do as churches? To the plain man the answer is clear: Let them as churches have done with war! If war is the collective sin they say it is, let them collectively quit participating in the sin. If war should be outlawed as they say, let them be the first to outlaw it by withdrawing from it spiritual sanction and putting it under the ban.”

“Let the preachers repentantly resolve that they will never again put Christ in khaki or serve as recruiting officers. . . . Let the secular arm know that war-making must henceforth be done outside the house of the Lord.” The *Christian Century* held to this line tenaciously;<sup>40</sup> it saw the travail of its soul and was satisfied. September 6, 1928, the editor of the *Century* was able to cable from Paris the victorious outcome of ten years of agitation. The planet had signed the pact and Aristide Briand, the most consistent war-hater of the European statesmen, summed it all up with French clarity—and restraint: “For the first time in the face of the whole world, through a solemn covenant invoking the honor of all nations . . . war is renounced unreservedly as an institution of national policy; that is in its most specific and dreaded form—selfish and wilful war.”

The pact was, M. Briand continued, “a direct blow to the institution of war, even to its very vitals.” War at any rate, if it should unfortunately recur, would be no longer

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\* A comparison of its files for the decade from 1922 to 1932 with the files of the *Outlook* from 1898 to 1917, in any discussion of war and the Church, reveals the emergence of a new and militant temper against war as a system during the second and third decades of the twentieth century.

"selfish or wilful." The reservations in favor of defensive war left the "very vitals" of war a little less vulnerable than Briand intimated, the signatory powers being left free to defend themselves against co-signatories who had solemnly promised never to attack them. The pact fitted admirably the general temper of the American churches. It was another manifestation of the nation's idealistic mission, it depended entirely upon moral opinion for its enforcement, it involved America in no entangling alliances and it left, in case it were violated, the nations not engaged in the violation the consoling privilege of speaking sadly—and as strongly as they dared—to their erring sisters.

It did greatly strengthen the strategic position of thoroughgoing pacifists who could, after it was signed, plead that they were acting and agitating within the avowed purpose of the nation itself. The decision of the Supreme Court after persistent litigation and appeal which denied the right of naturalization to Dr. Douglas Clyde Macintosh, because in taking the oath of allegiance he reserved the right to act according to his Christian conscience in case of war, would seem, however, to indicate that the Supreme Court does not recognize the pact as a basal law.<sup>41</sup> It may prove in time that the grand strategy of the pact in trusting its great ideal to the moral sense of humanity and the force of world public opinion may prove the most effective. Meanwhile the issue waits upon time. It is worth noting that the platform of the American

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<sup>41</sup> This cause bids fair to be a *cause célèbre*. It followed the precedent set by the case of Rosika Schwimmer and involved the fundamentals of the relation of the citizen to the state. Justice Hughes in a strongly argued minority decision upheld the right of the Christian conscience as against the state. Efforts for remedial legislation have so far been in vain. A rigid enforcement of the decision would probably make it impossible for a Friend to be hereafter naturalized in the United States. The Court, as a learned jurist friend said to the writer, probably had no alternative. It would likely have been wiser for the federal judge in the Naturalization Court not to have raised the question in the first place.

Peace Society in 1837 had within ninety-one years become the professed policy of Western civilization.

## XII

*The World Tomorrow* sent out in the early spring of 1931 a questionnaire on war and peace to fifty-three thousand ministers to which 19,372 replies were received. Sixty-six per cent of these replies favored immediate entrance into the League, eighty-three per cent were opposed to military training in public high schools and civilian colleges or universities, eighty per cent favored substantial reductions in armament, "even if the United States is compelled to take the initiative and make a proportionately greater reduction than other nations," sixty-two per cent believed that all protection of American lives and property in other lands should be confined to pacific means, sixty-two per cent believed the Church should go on record "as refusing to sanction or support any future war" and 10,427 clergymen of all denominations announced their "present purpose not to sanction any future war or participate as an armed combatant."

This last resolution is, of course, subject to the strain and passion of an actual state of war and the barrage of propaganda which war always uncovers. If two out of ten stand by their profession, and the policy toward conscientious objectors established in the last war followed, it would need a prison larger than Auburn State Prison to contain the segregated ministers in the next war. Among these witnesses to their Christian conviction would be, according to their avowed purpose, many of the most distinguished clergymen in America if America should go to war during their generation.

On the other hand, the clergy on record in reply to the aforesaid questionnaire who refused to sanction the unconditioned non-participation of the churches in war or promise their own non-participation include many of the church lead-

ers in their generation. It would be possible, for distinction and moral courage, to match name with name in the "Yes" and "No" printed lists. Evidently church leaders are not yet agreed upon the procedure of the churches, they are certainly one in their sincere desire for peace. The comments from secular and other sources upon the attitude of the "ten thousand" conclusively indicate that their attitude is unpopular. They do not represent a dominant public opinion. This issue also waits upon time.

The Church, which has had a longer experience in the power of Christian convictions to wear down trying forms of opposition than any other existing human institution, has phrased a proverb which having been proved true in other situations might possibly bear in some future time upon the long conflict between militarism and Christianity: The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.

## CHAPTER X

### THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT

THE Protestant churches were somewhat hindered in their quest for peace after the World War by militant doctrinal divisions in their own ranks. An engagement between religious conservatism and liberalism was due before the World War. That cataclysm both postponed it and added to its eventual bitterness. The history of Christianity is, unhappily, not strange to such conflicts; they are phases of a vaster movement whose active fronts may be anywhere: political, constitutional, social, economic, religious—no matter, for every outstanding aspect of the human enterprise begins as an adventure, ends as an institution and is in turn challenged by the mobile quests of the human mind.

As an adventure it is free and irresponsible, moves without a baggage train, does not always know where it is going, occasionally goes wrong altogether and ends in an impasse. (Bergson says creative evolution has done much the same things.) When it really finds an open road and fulfils its destiny, it becomes a state or a philosophy, Wall Street or the Vatican, a government or a creed. Then it becomes venerable and authoritative and builds appropriate institutions and secretes literatures and secures for itself all sorts of supports, and the generations live and die under the shadow or the shelter of it.

It persuades them finally that it always has been—or at least that it always ought to be—and finally it is the divine right of kings or an infallible Church or an infallible Book—or some other proud, strong thing without which life would be anarchy or despair. And all the while new minds and dreams which time has slowly brought to birth begin to question it and feel vaguely the restraint of it and look beyond it to further

horizons and, if they are strong enough and it does not give way, make breaches in its walls and break through with wounds and dust and shouting. And there seems as yet for us no other way to get on.

But that way has been always costly and often tragic. The Church, I say, has had its full share of all this. We are, says Kirsopp Lake, fundamentalists or institutionalists or experimentalists<sup>1</sup>—each after his own kind. The institutionalist builds his church, makes it strong and beautiful, loves it because he cannot conceive of religion without it. It gives him, besides, in the upkeep and ordering of it, an engaging occupation. The fundamentalist has a strong concern for the foundations of his faith and order and, very often, a clearer conception of what is likely to happen to the superstructure if the foundations are weakened, than the experimentalist.

That worthy is just what his name implies—impatient of definite theories and established positions, not greatly dependent upon institutional support. He is sometimes more interested in the quest for truth than in the outcome; he has his own particular brand of intolerance; he often overlooks the importance of the past. He has little force to consolidate the positions he wins, he commonly irritates every established order and he is—at his best—the pioneer in every advance the race has ever made.

The tension between the fundamentalist and the experimentalist (the institutionalist tries to reconcile them) has always been more likely to create tragic estrangements in religion than in any other region. Religion is essentially conservative; our deepest and strongest emotional associations lock up upon it. Its patterns are woven into our dispositions, its forms carry the most vital and delicate interests and loyalties. Religion is said to be an affair of the spirit with God but it grows

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<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow*, Kirsopp Lake, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, 1926, pages 56 *et seq.*



into creeds and sacraments, authorities and ecclesiastical institutions, as ivy grows into every crevice of a supporting wall. The supports of religion can never be structurally altered without wounding many delicate emotions and leaving a devastating sense of emptiness. Also in every theological controversy the sheerly human becomes very human indeed.

## I

Now all these elements were waiting to come into action in American religion before the war and with a new disposition of their forces. According to the genius of American Protestantism these different religious temperaments should group themselves denominationally: Fundamentalists in a "fundamental" church, experimentalists in an "experimental" church, institutionalists in an "institutional" church—and they had done about that. Quite experimental experimentalists were likely to be Unitarians or Universalists, moderate experimentalists Congregationalists.

These denominations favored the independent form of church government because it permitted "free wheeling," had a tested system of shock absorbers and localized its strains. Institutionalists and fundamentalists (I am still using those key-words with Lake's definitions) belonged to and functioned through larger denominations more tenaciously organized. Regional conditions were reflected in this historic pattern. In the first decade of the twentieth century this historically adjusted situation began to register the impact of the forces which were actually challenging inherited Christianity but whose drive was sure to be felt first and most disturbingly by Protestantism. Fundamental differences of attitude began to penetrate the denominations themselves. The Eastern liberal and the Western conservative (religiously—economically it was quite likely to be the other way around) had been getting on together very peaceably because they belonged to different denominations to

begin with and saw very little of one another to go on with. One can hardly say that distance lent enchantment to the view, but it was a capital insulator.

Now the experimentalist, the institutionalist and the fundamentalist were beginning to meet in the representative bodies of their own communions and with a growing and uneasy understanding of the differences between them. Each side (the issue was finally drawn between the fundamentalist who named himself, and the experimentalist who preferred to be called a "modernist") had underestimated the other and the forces with which they were dealing. The fundamentalist was slow to acknowledge how far his fundamentals had been dissolved. The modernist-liberal had been rather blind to what he was actually doing to religion and he was besides so taken up with the adventures of his pilgrim's progress as to have lost sight of his ultimate destination. Perhaps for any "experimentalist" the journey is the thing.

He had found the earlier stages of it, at any rate, an entrancing adventure. He had greeted evolution with a cheer. The amplitude of its processes laid a spell upon his imagination and he found no difficulty in reconciling evolution and theistic faith. His faith was lyric and still untouched by the chill winds destined to blow in from the unsunned spaces of the "mysterious universe." He was equally engrossed with taking the Bible apart and putting it together again. The documents of the first five books of the Old Testament furnished specialists in theological seminaries their occupation. The results of these studies conveyed to their congregations by ardent young ministers considerably disturbed the faithful who did not find the authority of German scholars an equivalent for the authority of God. The result was a complete revaluation of the Bible and the dissolution of the inherited seat of authority in Protestantism. The place of the supernatural in religion became vague, was denied, adroitly evaded.

The constructive shifted their emphases and sought broader foundations for faith. For the first time since Nicæa and Constantinople the great articles of the creeds were opposed by a consistent and unified system.

The fundamentalist sensed the implications of all this far more definitely than the modernist. He knew his Protestantism; it was Bible-founded, Bible-built, Bible-sustained. "J" and "E", the "Priests' Code" and the "Deuteronomist" were no substitutes for the revelation delivered to Moses through the smoke and flame of Mount Sinai. He knew that the dissolution of the authority of the Bible would leave the generality of believing Protestants bewildered. He knew his Christianity; it was a deliverance religion offering the salvation of men through the death of Jesus Christ, God incarnate. It opposed to the tragedy of a lost world the felicity of the redeemed and the final assumption by Jesus Christ of a visible and predestined authority; after that the dust of the ruined planet might be strewn through space; its destiny was accomplished.

These were the girders of the structure of inherited Christianity—Catholic or Protestant—and they seemed about to be removed by men who had nothing so stark, so strong, so sacrosanct to put in their place. Or, if they were not actually taken out, all the heart strength of them, tempered in the proving fires of twenty centuries, was being eaten out by the "acids of modernity." It was high time, the keepers of the girders thought, to set about their defense.

## II

The conservatives had already been consolidating their positions. If this or any other study of American religion in the last forty years seems to deal largely with changes, doubts, challenges, experiments and new theologies, it is because these

supply the most intriguing material. The constants are assumed. If one had no more to say than that for four decades people have been going to church as usual, using their appointed forms of worship, praying for such things as humanity has always prayed for and listening with edification to sermons whose course they could generally anticipate as soon as the text was announced, the historian's work would be well and truly, but very briefly, done. It would also, for all its brevity, be an account of a happy and contented Church. "Happy are the people who have no history."

Religious conservatism has, however, made enough history during the period here considered to save it from the felicity of the unchronicled; it formulated its own replies to every move of liberalism. It was all an affair of actions and reactions. Any challenge to the pattern of inherited Christianity will naturally be met at just the point where orthodoxy is imperiled. The process of defense evokes a new passion for the article assailed, contributes ingenious arguments, solidifies fluid positions, forbids compromises, engenders hot humors of the blood, and the resultant controversy grievously wounds the peace and concord of the Church.

The first position around which the conservative defense rallied was the authority of the Bible. The scholar, the evangelist, the teacher and the pietist all joined in the support of their inherited conceptions. The scholar moved in a somewhat rarefied atmosphere. He dealt with Hebrew words and what could be concluded—or not concluded—from variations in style. He opposed the accepted solidity of his own position, if he were a conservative, to the manifest differences of opinion among higher critics. He rehearsed the views of the Fathers and furnished the combatants on more exposed fronts with weighty ammunition. The more telling work, however, was done, as Cole summarizes it, by "the Bible and prophetic-con-

ference movements, professional evangelism, Bible schools, tractarian propaganda and polemic preaching.”<sup>2</sup>

Bible conferences antedated the fundamentalist movement and trained many of its leaders. George C. Needham and A. J. Gordon—familiar names to those who know the Northfield of the nineties—promoted a conference in New York in 1877. Another more widely attended was held later in Chicago. The leaders of these early movements believed in the “personal and pre-millennial” return of Jesus Christ to this earth. The associations of fundamentalism with the “second coming” were thus early established. Almost every sentence here asks for comment. The “second coming” is affirmed in the historic creeds—“from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead”—but even among the most orthodox it had been allowed to fall into the background as a program of history not bearing definitely upon the present and involving difficulties which would better be left to the event for resolution.

The renaissance of that belief has always followed widespread disaster. In the orderly world of 1880 it was urged only by the more literally minded and those to whom through distaste and, maybe, weariness of the world the old drama of the issue of this world’s enterprises was congenial. Such leaders had also a keen intellectual interest in esoteric detail. The chronology of the book of Daniel and such cryptic sayings supplied fascinating material for the exercise of their minds.<sup>3</sup> The insistence of teachers so minded kept alive the doctrine of the “second coming,” and the war gave it an enormous leverage. For here was Armageddon from the North Sea to the

<sup>2</sup> *The History of Fundamentalism*, Stewart G. Cole, Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York, 1931, Chapter I. This book is sound, scholarly, well documented, the best in its field. This chapter is deeply in debt to it.

<sup>3</sup> The cover of the *Exponent* St. Louis, Mo., not dated (received February, 1932) advertises God’s “Astrolabe,” the Ages Foretold, pages 105-127 with a diagram of the Pyramid of Cheops which it says “carries a potent prophetic message to the world” and dates the Second Coming in (apparently) 1936.

Euphrates, and all the murk and splendor of apocalyptic vision become the headlines of every morning's newspaper. When the end came it left a world so shaken, broken, stripped that there seemed no hope for it but to save the elect and wreck completely the already half-ruined business of the planet. No wonder the "second coming" became one of the key contentions of the fundamentalist. Had he not seen the prophecies of its dawn in smoke and flame?

The Niagara Bible Conference formulated in 1895 the five points of "sound doctrine": the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, the physical resurrection and the bodily return of Christ.<sup>4</sup> The leaders of this conference were preachers of great persuasive power. The writer, who heard them often at Northfield, would be the first to acknowledge their earnestness and power. Their system of belief was definite and final, supported by battalions of proof texts, masterly marshaled and validated as they believed by divine revelation. Their persuasion of being thus authenticated occasionally gave to their words and bearing some suggestion of conscious superiority which those less divinely validated found trying. Their positive preaching suited the temper of those whom they taught. Few groping experimentalists could match them for power over an audience. Moody, I believe, held the doctrine of the second coming—but somewhat in reserve. It was there but his contemporaneous enterprises were very engrossing and he had no desire for their premature conclusion.

These Bible conferences were not entirely controversial; they cultivated piety and under the influence of English Keswick urged the quest for the second blessing and the sinless life. They were attended for the most part by church people already well established in the Christian faith, who had an

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<sup>4</sup> Cole, *op. cit.*, page 34.

inexhaustible capacity for being preached to and who found in the conferences a happy combination of an unworldly summer vacation and the nurture of the soul. They were apt, upon their return to their own churches, to question the complete orthodoxy of their ministers and compare their sermonic gifts unfavorably with the masters of assembly to whom they had been listening. And, of course, the conferences were largely attended by ministers themselves whose preaching thereafter reflected the conference teaching.

Every section of the country had a focal conference. The sectional temper colored each but they had a common system of teaching and the key-words of the whole movement echoed from platform to platform. They were maintaining the "old gospel" against the critical temper and the menacing secularism of the American scene. Behind it all—as Cole notes—was a contest of cultures for the mastery of the American religious mind. The strategic significance of the revival in American religious life has already been noted. Professional evangelism had lost ground in the North and East; it had lost ground with the sophisticated—but such as these were not the whole of America.

The evangelist did not easily surrender an office so strangely compounded of a sincere concern for souls, the glamor of personal power and the hire of a worthy workman. Nor did the vast gray stretches of American life easily surrender the emotional release and blameless excitement of a revival. There is, even now (1931), a literature devoted to professional evangelism; the number of meetings and evangelists it chronicles is surprising. The conferences were generally organized and conducted by evangelists. These were not experimentalists, and the few who tried to be "modernists" either failed in converting power or, like B. Fay Mills, took erratic lines. Their technique had been perfected since Jonathan Edwards, Whitefield and John Wesley. Like St. Paul, they "reasoned of

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righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" though not always with that apostle's unfailing courtesy and temperance of speech. The time-tempered system of Protestant doctrine was the spearhead of their attack—how else could they pierce the hearts of the impenitent?

With the turn of the century they discovered in the order of society about them the prophesied kingdom of Antichrist. Civilization had been turned into a stronghold of unbelief<sup>5</sup> and somewhere in its gathering shadows were the men who, through their scholarship or their science, were breaking down faith. Such preaching as this, including in one general condemnation the growing restlessness of society under the inherited asceticisms of Protestantism, the worldliness of the churches, the conclusions of science—evolution specifically—and the liberal religious mind, did much to create and embitter the tensions on both sides.

### III

Theological seminaries and denominational colleges felt the strain. The control of education was, of course, fundamental on both sides. Andover Theological Seminary, with the then most rigid creed, I suppose, of any theological institution in the world and, at the time of the "Andover controversy," one of the most liberal faculties—a triumph of mind over deeds of trust—took the first drive in 1886. It came indirectly through the unwillingness of the conservatives in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to allow one of its missionaries—a graduate of Andover—to return to India after ten years' service there because he doubted the unconditional damnation of the "heathen." This issue thus raised developed into a strategical contest of the first class and went far toward determining the doctrinal position of New England Congregationalism. Its historic freedom in faith was main-

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<sup>5</sup> See a quotation from A. T. Pierson, Cole, *op. cit.*, page 37.



tained. Union Seminary, New York, was next drawn into engagement through such debatable teachings of Professor Briggs about Moses and Isaiah as have already been noted. In general, the theological schools of the East and North came under the suspicion of the conservatives and, for all their discretion, probably deserved it; for they maintained the rights of the free scholar in his own field and sought to adapt their teaching to the changing mind of the time.

There was at about the same time a self-sought emancipation of the older and stronger colleges from denominational control. Their growing endowments made them independent, and their denominational constituency had no longer much sense of responsibility for them, especially when asked for money.<sup>6</sup> Their extended curricula made the preparation of "a learned and godly ministry" incidental. They drew their students from every denomination; they had no other choice than to maintain the cause of free scholastic inquiry in every field and they desired for their older professors—for whom they had some concern and no retirement provision—the consoling privilege of the Carnegie Pension Fund.<sup>7</sup>

Significant changes in college administrations followed. College presidents had been, in the inherited procedure of the American college, clergymen chosen for their intellectual distinction and their capacity for moral and religious leadership. Their station gave them great distinction, and they created and maintained a noble tradition. They led "compulsory" chapel in the cold, gray dawn of wintry mornings, preached in the college chapel on Sundays, taught ethics or philosophy, raised money, visited their alumni, lectured to preachers, spoke authoritatively to the assemblies of their denominations and to the mind of their time, and, when they had nothing else to do,

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Andrews when president of Brown is reported to have said that his chief difficulty was to persuade Baptists that Brown was a Baptist institution—and others that it was not.

<sup>7</sup> Not granted to denominational institutions.

wrote books, some of which, like Hyde's *Five Great Philosophies of Life*, have become classics.

When such men as Hyde of Bowdoin, Buckham of Vermont, Tucker of Dartmouth, Dwight of Yale, Carter and Hopkins of Williams, Harris of Amherst and Seely of Smith were succeeded by specialized administrators trained in the technique of education, something was lost in the age-old relation of religion to education of inestimable worth to religion, to education and to the integrity of society.<sup>8</sup> Religion at least lost its intellectual prestige for the undergraduate and became an errant and optional ghost.<sup>9</sup>

## IV

The conservative met this situation in two ways: he founded, for the training of Christian workers, schools of his own; he sought to maintain his ascendancy in schools already established or regain it if they seemed to be surrendering to the new learning. Moody founded his Chicago Bible Institute to train men and women for gospel work among the laboring classes and the poor. The Bible, in Moody's understanding of it, furnished the basis for such training, but the school was not unduly critical of the ministry or the churches at large. Moody left his children a most modest estate, proud memories and the responsibility for the continued administration of his schools.

The Bible Institute was eventually transferred to another control, and its temper became thereafter more polemical. Its graduates, their leaders held, were commissioned to furnish an apostate age a spiritual ministry which the theological sem-

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<sup>8</sup> I recently preached to a pathetically small congregation, where years before the historic church used to be full. I was told the president was having a trustees' meeting at the morning chapel hour. The college has maintained and increased its distinction—but something was gone.

<sup>9</sup> This statement should be qualified. Almost all colleges recognize religion in their curricula, have boards of preachers, deans of chapel, etc. But the situation has changed for all that.

inaries were failing to create. Zeal rather than scholastic training was the entrance condition. The Bible institute and similar schools did get a very numerous following of men and women of great religious earnestness though restricted outlook. They have often been better trained in the technique of effective popular appeal than the graduates of the seminaries. They have been willing to live simply, serve the smaller churches and keep close to the lower American religious culture level. Their cumulative influence has thus been very great. They helped sow the field for the harvest which was to follow.

The conservative group published a vigorously written, widely circulated and extensively read literature. And the people who read their books, tracts and periodicals could understand them. No references to "J" and "E," the "Redactor," the Deuteronomist and other anonymous Hebrews of uncertain existence and doubtful authority darkened their pages. All this took money—and they had, apparently, plenty of money. The motivation of the generous contributions they received occasioned conjecture. The "social gospel" and liberal theology were as interlocking as were the "old gospel," economic conservatism and a general despair of the future of the world. The modernist may have specialized in the social gospel through some lack of any other gospel to specialize in but he was under a nobler compulsion than that. He preached and taught it with conviction because he found an authority for it in the teachings of Jesus and because his age needed it. He believed the world as a going concern had a future which only the astronomer could calculate, and he had a sound humane and religious passion for its well-being and well-doing.

The extreme fundamentalist did not believe the world was worth saving or could, as a going concern, be saved. Judgment, fire and perdition were reserved for the "wicked world" so radically opposed to God and under the control of his arch

enemy.”<sup>10</sup> It was, as you please, a council of comfort or despair. The Church’s task then was to save as many as possible from the destined wreck and leave a world, which after two thousand years of Christian ministry was so radically opposed to God as to be under the control of His arch enemy, to fire and perdition. It would seem that a Church so branded with moral impotence by a strong group of its leaders hardly deserved to escape the same fate.

There has always been among the modernists the suspicion that many American business men welcomed all this as a smoke screen. They were perfectly willing that the champions of the social gospel should be damned for the glory of God if only their particular business were not disturbed. There is little evidence that they felt their own affairs likely to be prematurely brought to the divine judgment seat; they were more disturbed by contemporaneous curiosity as to their ethics and profits. They had besides the sincere, water-tight compartment piety, which has been one of the paradoxes of religion, and were, both in religion and economics, thoroughgoing individualists. Their representative spokesmen have certainly insisted that preaching confine itself to the “old gospel.” Whether through the generous piety of its supporters or their desire to deflect the drive of the social gospel, fundamentalism had an ample “war chest.”

Of this California furnished a conspicuous instance. In Los Angeles two laymen (brothers) founded a Bible institute, contributed an “evangelistic fund” and made possible the twelve volumes of *The Fundamentals*. Dr. A. C. Dixon brought to the supervision of their publication the peculiar genius with which the Dixon name has been associated. He had Louis Meyer and R. A. Torrey for associates and a trust fund of three hundred thousand dollars to draw upon. The result was

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Cole, *op. cit.*, page 54.

a triumph of religious publication. Nearly three million copies were circulated, "the great majority of Protestant missionary workers of the world" received them along with key-men in every department of the Christian enterprise. These books maintained and reasserted the essential beliefs of inherited evangelical Protestantism in articles contributed by men of great reputation in the English-speaking world and Germany. They also added to their defense of the faith once delivered to the saints a considerable criticism of those who thought and taught otherwise. The sword of the Spirit was at last out of the scabbard.

Preaching naturally assumed a more polemic temper. A preacher is rarely at his best unless he is at grips with some adversary seen or unseen. Now he had very visible adversaries; evolution, higher criticism, disregard of the supernatural. The defenders of the faith had among them men of rare gifts for caustic speech and the strategic advantage. Their cause was clearly defined, they had on their side historic inheritances of Protestantism never far below the surface of American society and capable of being very quickly and emotionally mobilized. They were attended by the memories and associations of the centuries and they knew how powerfully to strike chords whose response was sure and reverberating. "The Old Rugged Cross" and the Bible "Message from the Skies" were of the very substance of the imperiled faith they defended. Those portentous tides of mass emotion which, before the war, rocked the whole American structure caught up and carried along the champions of the old gospel.

What would have come of all this without the war is only conjecture. Some sort of conflict was inevitable. A fateful hour had struck—half heard, dimly understood. The actual strokes of it, soon to be sounded along a thousand miles of drumfire, reversed the old Breton legend. They were no echoes of the past heard wistfully from the towers of buried

temples; they were the announcement of the final arrival in every region of society of new forces—whose issues could not then, or now, be foreseen. Christianity had never since it became an authoritative doctrine been so challenged. All that has so far been written in this chapter deals only with concrete, front line, dramatic things.

Behind these contestants were the vaster deployments of philosophy, psychology and science, changed social attitudes, economic pressures, class and culture antagonisms; and Christianity had given hostages to every imperiled thing: nay, the very roots of it veined the whole order whose solidity was assailed. Never in its history had the Church more reason to remember the warning words of Jesus: "My Kingdom is not of this world." The forms of faith organized out of the entire content of the mind of Western civilization for a thousand years could not, would not, surrender without fighting to the end.

The modernist on the other hand saw that unless religion could come to some terms with a new mind compact of so many elements, all of them changed, some of them revolutionary, its immemorial sovereignty was endangered. And he was pressed for time, handicapped by the strange immensity of his task. It was as one sees it like a Greek tragedy with the protagonists under the compulsion of something vaster than themselves, inexorable and giving as yet no clear intimation of the appointed issue. The sense of this must touch the pen of any man who rehearses the drama with something of the pity the Greek tragedians felt for *Œdipus* and *Antigone*.

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The war arrested and then intensified the action. Propaganda created in the mature American mind a lust for conflict. The young who finally got to the front and fought it out found a cleansing though costly outlet for their emotions. The rest—those who stayed at home—found no outlet at all. The physi-

ologists have a word for it and so has the psychologist. The psychologist's word is more discreet. Post-war America had a frustration complex. The ministry who suffered from it about as acutely as any other class, apparently, actually welcomed an opportunity to carry militancy into action. This I venture to believe explains in part the temper in which the controversy between the two wings of great Christian communions was carried through. In a society which was seamed by acrimony, it was too much to expect the churches to be at peace. Without the war, there might have been some attempt at reconciliation, though the outcome would have been doubtful. The cleavage went too deep.

War-time religious workers had hoped that denominational differences and the marginal sterilities and contradictions of Christianity had been burned out in those flames, that a new religious order of living reality and unity would be drawn from the crucible of pain and sacrifice into which humanity had been cast.<sup>11</sup> The men at the front, chaplains reported, felt that the churches were futile; they were indifferent to doctrinal and ecclesiastical divisions. They wanted churches to justify their existence "by illustrating in courageous and consistent practice the moral standards of Christianity," to be brotherly in their fellowship and democratic in their government, to recast "the present industrial system in a more humane form" and much else. The clergy who shared the real fighting at the front came home with the hope of seeing something like this come true. The Interchurch World Movement actually undertook to realize it. The issue of such gleams through the darkness would seem to indicate that a transformed Christianity cannot be drawn from the crucible of war.

There was nothing for it, then, save for what Cole calls the "conflict of ideals" in the evangelical churches to take its

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<sup>11</sup> For a full discussion of this see *The Army and Religion*, Association Press, New York, 1920.

appointed course. It challenged the attention of a world already occupied by an engrossing variety of interests. Mitchell Palmer's campaigns against the "reds" were beginning to die of malnutrition, and "static" to displace revolutionary explosions. Station KDKA had radioed Harding's election, Dr. Van Etten of Pittsburgh had permitted his services at Calvary Church to be broadcast. The Dixmore Golf Club announced that it would install a radio to enable its congregation to hear church services; Babe Ruth already belonged to history, a prize-fight drew a million dollars, Atlantic City staged a beauty pageant, Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street" was reading Wells's *Outline of History* or *If Winter Comes*. Margot Asquith was brightening American society by her reminiscences of the twilight of the English aristocracy<sup>12</sup> and the youth of these United States were experimenting with their "new freedom."

Conservative Baptists, on the contrary, were much concerned over what was happening to their old freedom. They had inherited the high tradition of the most distinctively democratic movement in the Protestant Reformation, Roger Williams's "soul liberty" (though the official historian of Rhode Island has maintained that Dr. John Clarke and not the "seeker" originated that phrase) and for their creed the infallible word of God in the New Testament. Their denominational strength was outstanding, their regional distribution inclusive; they were, therefore, in a position sensitively to reflect pretty much the entire range of the American Protestant mind. The University of Chicago was "modern" to the minute. Massee, Brouger and Straton were as representatively fundamental.

Baptist seminaries fell under suspicion and an investigation was proposed. The conservative element took the initiative

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<sup>12</sup> *Only Yesterday*, Frederick Lewis Allen, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1931, Chapter IV. Allen's book is a vivid résumé of pretty much everything which has happened in America since the war.



and were ready "to do battle royal for the fundamentals." In 1921 they undertook to impose a doctrinal test upon the Northern Baptists—a definite departure from the genius of the denomination—and sought the expulsion from their seminaries of erring professors. William Jennings Bryan, who was unwilling that the kind of religion he believed in should be crucified upon a cross of evolution or Biblical criticism either, supported their cause.

But the Baptists under the leadership of the more judicious maintained their historic position. Fosdick, who had just come back from China where he had found foreign missionary work suffering from the exportation of American doctrinal polemics to an already sadly tried country, preached one of his history-making sermons. The Church, he said, had a more insistent business than driving out those who did not agree with the fundamentalist theory of inspiration—"What immeasurable folly!" These plain words spoken from the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church of New York, in which Fosdick was then "special preacher," drew the critical attention of the conservatives in the Presbytery of New York. The result—eventually—was Fosdick's return to his own communion and the fretted tower which dominates Riverside Heights. Fosdick became in addition the representative voice of the liberal religious mind in America—

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform."

There seemed at one time the prospect of a complete schism between the two North Baptist wings, but the good sense—one suspects of the more inarticulate—defeated every endeavor of the fundamentalists to divide the denomination, get control of the Foreign Mission Board or put an end to "soul liberty."<sup>18</sup> In some ways the whole affair is more reveal-

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<sup>18</sup> See Cole, *op. cit.*, page 72.

ing as to the liberal drift than the fundamental reaction. The definition of the "gospel" offered by the conservatives as a test for missionaries reads very much like the historic faith of Christianity. The University of Chicago was then and has continued to be in advance of even the moderate liberal. No wonder its divinity school failed "to win universal approval among Baptists." The Baptists have been fortunate in scholars of an international reputation but an exhibit of their opinions in the 1920's (and this exhibit was made) was not calculated to quiet the unrest of their more conservative brethren.

These in turn safeguarded their faith by founding schools for training ministers upon a sound doctrinal basis. These adjustments eased the strain, the elastic organization of the denomination adjusted itself without breaking to those differences of theological opinion which were—and are—bound to characterize any church which is catholic enough to include representative sections and classes in America. The institutionalists proposed and carried through the New World Movement with a budget of \$100,000,000; all the churches thought and planned in staggering-figures at that period. The campaign necessarily included a good deal of forgetting and forgiving. Few humans are more adroit and irenic than church officials trying to raise one hundred million dollars.

The fundamentalist controversy in all the churches which engaged in it had its brighter aspects. It contributed to the doctrinal education of everybody concerned, though it very likely did not change many positions already held—possibly fixing them even more tenaciously. It compelled the contestants to give reasons for the faith that was in them and should have given to the American church-mind something of those theological qualities which are said to explain the tough fiber of the Scotch mind. The outcome does not perhaps justify this position but, beyond debate, church assemblies were for the time greatly enlivened, delegates and commissioners

smelled the battle from afar, and went up eagerly to meetings which may without some such stimuli become rather routine exercises. Good sturdy blows were exchanged and, though there were in the end few casualties, the joy of combat was sincere. Even John Milton's fallen angels found some alteration of their sad estate in reasoning

" . . . . . high  
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will and Fate  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute."

Our fallen humanity enjoys the same exercise.

## VI

There is no need in a chapter on this scale to review the details of action and reaction in the denominations involved. What the Baptists did was representative. The conservatives in each communion sought to reaffirm and impose their older doctrinal taste, control theological education, direct missionary enterprises and secure control of denominational machinery. The liberals questioned the historicity of the tests proposed, defended their own positions and above all claimed the right to be good Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples or Methodists and keep on thinking as they did. They sought also—and in this they seem to have been justified by the issue—to keep their respective ministries open to young men who, through the very necessity of the changing mind of the age, would not and could not enter the ministry unless they were allowed to think in terms of the intellectual culture in which they had been nurtured.

The younger generation of ministers justifies this confidence. They are not doctrinally minded, but they are devout, wise and by New Testament tests entirely Christian. They share those perplexities of their age in whose staggering vastness documents and authorities become of minor concern, but

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they are positive and brave voices for peace, justice, a humane social order and the sovereignty of the way, the truth and the life of Jesus Christ in every region of individual and social life. Doctrinally and intellectually they are "free born" but they have not abused their freedom. They, too, are fundamentalists, and one who has known so many of them and rejoiced in their eager and gracious and loyal spirits may venture to believe that their fundamentalism would be very grateful to the Master of the churches.

The disquiet in the Presbyterian Church which covered about ten years—some of them stormy enough—centered about a necessary measure of freedom in teaching and preaching for which the liberal group contended, interpretations of their historic "Confession" and the rights of presbyteries and the General Assembly in the examination and ordination of ministers. The presbyteries represented the intimate and local aspect of the church, the General Assembly its national mind and authority. The freedom of the presbyteries in examination and ordination meant that regional tempers would be allowed expression and a principle of accommodation be secured. The church would in this way remain catholically representative of its various minds and be saved from difficult—or impossible—strains. A too rigid Assembly control would, it was maintained, not only be alien to the constitution of the church but would regiment its mind in very undesirable ways.<sup>14</sup>

The sectors occupied by Dr. Fosdick of the First Presbyterian Church in south central Manhattan Island and Union Seminary a hundred blocks farther north were particularly active and the more aggressive action carried on between the Presbyteries of Philadelphia and New York, Dr. Fosdick's sermon "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" was, as has been

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<sup>14</sup>For a judicious statement of the liberal position see "Fundamentalism in the Presbyterian Church," Robert Hastings Nichols, *The Journal of Religion*, January, 1925.

said, provocative. The Presbytery of Philadelphia charged, in an overture to the General Assembly, that there was preaching in the First Presbyterian Church in New York "which appeared to be in open denial of the essential doctrines of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and subversive of the truth of Christianity." It asked the General Assembly "to direct the Presbytery of New York to take such action as will require the preaching and teaching in the First Presbyterian Church of New York City to conform to the system of doctrine taught in the Confession of Faith."<sup>15</sup>

It has always been a difficult matter to bring Fosdick's preaching into conformity with anything save his own mind and conscience, and New York Presbytery was in no hurry to try. The First Presbyterian Church, moreover, was unwilling to give up one of the most distinguished preachers in the English-speaking world who could fill a great church—not too advantageously situated—with a packed congregation every Sunday morning. A very representative group of progressives drew up an "affirmation"<sup>16</sup> in which loyalty to the Westminster Confession and the Bible were disassociated from a too rigid interpretation of either. They opposed on constitutional grounds any attempt to elevate the five-point test or any one of the five "to the position of tests for ordination or for good standing in their church." They deplored "the evidences of division in our beloved Church, in the face of a world so desperately in need of a united testimony to the gospel of Christ."<sup>17</sup> The issue was thus joined.

It is only fair to say that Fosdick had addressed himself to the general situation and to no single denomination. On the other hand the protestants were well within their ecclesi-

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> This is known as the Auburn Affirmation though the "affirmationists" met at Syracuse. It was not an official statement of the Seminary. It apparently got its name from having been printed in Auburn, N. Y.

<sup>17</sup> From the affirmation.

astical rights. Conservative Baptists would probably have protested against a Presbyterian who not only occupied a most desirable Baptist pulpit but lent aid and comfort to the other side. The Assembly by a majority vote expressed "its profound sorrow that doctrines contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian Church, proclaimed in said pulpit, have been the cause of controversy and division in our church," and directed the Presbytery of New York to secure proper conformity from the First Church pulpit. The alternative was Dr. Fosdick's surrender of the Presbyterian pulpit—an entirely defensible Assembly decision. Fosdick felt that he could not with a good conscience transfer his communion. The Communion of the Saints thus failed of an ideal demonstration but both the First Presbyterian Church in New York and Dr. Fosdick have continued their distinguished services to the Christian order.

The Presbytery of New York ordained two young men, graduates of Union Seminary (New York), who did not definitely affirm belief in the "virgin birth." This was one of the "five points." The Judicial Commission of the General Assembly to which these cases were referred ruled that final control in ordination rested with the General Assembly and that its affirmations of doctrine were final tests, and the New York Presbytery was reprimanded. The progressives questioned the constitutionality of this ruling; it seemed to reverse the historic procedure of the church and radically change the church's policy. The "institutionalists" came into action at this point and asked for a special commission to study the peace of the church. The younger ministers pleaded the cause of their own future, and "a policy of doctrinal forbearance"<sup>28</sup> began to prevail. The final action maintained the right of the Assembly to review the decision of the Presbytery but made the records of the Presbytery itself the only admissible evidence.

<sup>28</sup> Cole, *op cit.*, page 107.

The fundamentalist controversy in any denomination was only one aspect of the enterprise of the churches during this unsettled period. Each communion was committed to vast enterprises on a scale to which the war had habituated the American mind. The Baptists had their New World Movement and the Presbyterians their New Era program. Such movements united otherwise divided elements. Peace-loving leaders also sought to recall the churches to their more immediate duties through programs of evangelism. The "new world" and the "new era" got somehow sadly postponed but they were more Christian releases for tense tempers than doctrinal controversies. The visions so sincerely entertained served their purpose even if the world persisted in its old confused ways. The ground swell of the storms of those years persisted—still persists—though there is probably, at this writing, among all the protagonists a disturbing sense of the rise of more menacing tides than any which shook their ecclesiastical structure from 1920 to 1925.

## VII

Fundamentalism among the Disciples paralleled rather closely the Baptist storm and stress and with, perhaps, more stormy passages, for that fellowship retained longer than most other American churches the spirit of the frontier and the evangelical "pattern." The Disciples felt the "impact of the larger world of culture upon their religious inheritance"<sup>19</sup> at two sensitive points, "open membership" and the infallibility of the Scriptures. "Open membership" would allow the reception of unimmersed members from other churches; open membership was urged by the progressives and opposed by the conservatives. Progressive Disciples associated a training

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted from *Progress*, H. L. Willett, Editor, Chicago, 1914, by Cole, *op. cit.*, page 132.

school for ministers with Chicago University and the young men trained there were naturally greatly influenced by the critical temper of university scholars. Conservative Disciples soon began to feel that those who had come under this influence needed some "restoration" to the faith. The progressives were supported by the *Christian Century*, the most vigorous organ of a liberal and socially minded Christianity in America. The conservative cause was supported by the *Christian Standard*. The names of these embattled journals were suggestive: The new century vs. the old standards.

The "restorationist groups" sought control of the foreign missionary work of their denomination, and much of the political maneuvering—in which even the saints engage—centered around this endeavor. Their slogan might have been "American orthodoxy for the Far East."<sup>20</sup> The independent organization of the Disciples churches made it possible for the conservatives to organize a right wing and live the life of primitive Christians as they conceived it in an undivided church. They commanded considerable funds and have been able to carry on a missionary and education program of their own. Reorganization of their denominational agencies further complicated the affairs of the Disciples. Their "Men and Millions" movement failed to heal their wounds—even an evangelistic crusade failed in its irenic purpose. They remained "seriously divided."

The Methodist Episcopal churches (North) were as agitated over their conference courses of study as any other single thing. There had never before been so many religious books. Publishers were ready to supply anything asked for—fundamental, experimental or institutional. The choice

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<sup>20</sup> During this period Burriss Jenkins started *The Christian*—one of the most engaging religious journals now published. He left off "Century" and "Standard"—Christian was enough for him. See Cole, *op. cit.* page 140.



of officially approved books became therefore a delicate matter. The orthodox wanted no recognition of the liberal mind; the progressive objected to a Methodist "index" and held that their ministry should know the mind of their time and reflect its scholarship. Other disturbing influences considerably intervened the councils of the church.

But Methodism had effective safeguards. It has never been excessively doctrinal. Warm evangelical piety, the loyalty of its communicants and clergy to the church and a crusader's passion for righteous and humane causes have been its outstanding characteristics. Its episcopal constitution, incarnate in bishops always of distinguished capacity, rare genius for administration and a great deal of practical wisdom in dealing with the restless and recalcitrant, was during the fundamentalist controversy proof against insurgencies. Their good ship shook in the storm but held its course.

The Protestant Episcopal Church recited the ancient creeds, repeated its treasury of prayers and through old, old litanies asked deliverance from the sins of the flesh, the spirit and the common perils of humanity. It did not entirely escape the confusions of the time but its strong corporate life controlled them. In January, 1923, the Rev. Dr. Percy Stickney Grant, whose deviations from ecclesiastical conventions more than once occasioned his ecclesiastical superiors concern, was directed by Bishop Manning to disavow his denial that Jesus Christ had the power of God or resign. "Very few clergymen," Dr. Grant had said, "who have been educated in the larger universities where science is taught accept the idea that Jesus had the power of God."<sup>22</sup> The miracles, Dr. Grant added, might be explained by suggestion, and he was inclined to believe that Coué, whose "getting better every day in every way" was just then being offered as a potent formula for the resolu-

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<sup>22</sup> *New York Times*, January 20, 1923.

tion of all human ills, might furnish a key to the New Testament narrative of the supernatural.

The Bishop dissented but Dr. Grant got the headlines. His sermon was published in full. The reactions were not entirely favorable. One of Grant's fellow-clergymen asked if the Rector of St. Marks "would use Gethsemane for golf links, or play bridge at the Holy Sepulcher?"<sup>23</sup> But a good deal of water had run under the bridge since the Crapsey trial. Bishop William Lawrence of Massachusetts represented, and commandingly, the liberal mind in his communion.<sup>24</sup> And there were others. The fires were officially banked, the church maintained not without strain its catholicity, Dr. Grant turned his genius for getting into the spotlight to other matters, Bishop Manning continued on Morningside Heights the building of "A House of Prayer for All People." Other bishops were charged with the somewhat vague but demanding responsibility of a Bishops' Crusade.

The significant strains came in another region. The ghosts of Newman and Pusey began to haunt the assemblies of American episcopacy. The church of Virginia and the Carolinas, deeply rooted in colonial and state history, had offered perhaps the most agreeably mellow form of religion in the American scene. The church in the North was predominately urban and sophisticated<sup>25</sup> and before the 1890's can hardly have been called predominately "high." Later it began to feel and to acknowledge the influence of the Anglo-Catholic. Result: a contest over fundamentals as acute as in other communions but in another and more mystical region and with entirely different key-words. Sacramentalism, the validity of "orders," the relation of the Anglican to the Roman Catholic order and

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, January 29, 1923.

<sup>24</sup> See for his attitude, *Memories of a Happy Life*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1926, pages 100 *et seq.*

<sup>25</sup> It was said of a famous English transatlantic line that "while a gentleman might 'cross' on another line, no gentleman would."

whether it was actually Protestant or not—or wanted to be—became the questions in debate. Anglo-Catholicism has complicated the always difficult question of the relation of the Episcopalian to the evangelical churches and their coöperative enterprises, it has heightened ritualistic tendencies and added another divisive influence to a religious situation already seamed (I mean the entire religious situation in America) by a sufficiency of highly engrossing differences.

Dr. Cole has traced the extension of the religious conflict beyond the churches themselves. It became in many tangled forms one more aspect of the confusion of American thought since the war; it was paralleled by similar movements in the social and economic field and sometimes closely associated with them. At one time the more speculative anticipated a cleavage of religious Protestant America into two groups—liberal and conservative—but the centripetal force of church organization has been too strong for that. Such a cleavage was and is undesirable. It is probably better that a church should include contrasted and even competitive minds, tempers and culture levels. Otherwise it does not represent our general humanity and is likely to die of the complaint which according to Huxley proved fatal to the Metaphysical Society; "It died," he said, "of too much love."<sup>26</sup> Conflict of opinion is needed to keep any cause alive.

It cannot be said at this writing that any of the denominations involved in the fundamentalist controversy are likely to die of too much love between their right and left wings. Like Mr. Valiant-for-Truth the contest has left a legacy of scars, and some of its wounds are less Christian and were not gained in his cause. They will be a long time healing, and the action is still incomplete. As in other regions, a perturbed religious world which watches sadly the completion of the first

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<sup>26</sup> *Life and Letters of Thomas H. Huxley*, Vol. I, page 340. The premature death of the society was not, however, due to unity of opinion.

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third of a century it saluted so hopefully can only wait for issues which are apparently beyond its power to hasten—or clearly to foresee.

### VIII

The Dayton (Tennessee) trial dramatized the inevitable conflict for all the world to see and mock or mourn over. Biological evolution was concrete enough to focus the whole issue. The implications of geology and astronomy were equally dangerous to the biblical literalist, and behavioristic psychology was really far more dangerous, but the conservatism of 1922-1927 had not yet felt the menace of that spearhead which thrust, not at a man's belief, but at the reality of his personality and left him only a series of predetermined reactions haunted by the delusion that he was a free spirit. The devout who were so deeply stirred by biological evolution had little imagination for the record of the rocks or the unbelievable loneliness of the stars.

Evolution was different. All religions have agreed that man was the last and crowning achievement of the gods, or God. He was made in their—or His—image and it was easy, therefore, to conceive the personality of God through one's knowledge of one's self. Here more than anywhere else man's faith in a creative God has found its support and demonstration. Eastern religions in which man is only the spray of the universal ocean of Being flung up for a moment into light or shadow, to fall back and be lost in the All, could absorb evolution without a shock. Christianity was different.

The crowds who applauded Bryan's denunciation of evolution did not think in these abstract ways; they felt vividly that evolution was taking away their God—and who can blame them? A superheated literature gave them the choice between God and the gorilla for the ultimate ancestor of humanity. (It was Huxley and Wilberforce again without the urbanity of

Wilberforce and the caustic wit of Huxley.) There was, it seemed, one way of saving God and themselves: pass a law about it. Legislation could not reach privately supported institutions, it could reach state-supported schools. William J. Bryan devoted the last period of his stormy and evangelical career to this cause. He was Peter the Hermit once more calling Christian America to another crusade to rescue the Temple and the Sepulcher from the infidel, and the common folk of the South especially, where his power was still magical, obeyed his call.<sup>27</sup> Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas passed anti-evolution laws. Bills were introduced and lost in seven other states.<sup>28</sup> The educators of the nation were aroused by the gravity of the situation for such laws imperiled the whole structure of education. The "flying fundamentalists" carried the issue as far north as Minnesota.

Dayton, Tennessee, and the Scopes trial broadcast the situation to the world and, for a season, it crowded everything else off the front pages of the newspapers. The newspapers themselves had perfected their front page technique. "One thing at a time" was their slogan, a prodigal display of ink their instrument, the emotional instability of the age the chords waiting to be struck and there had been a procession of headlines. Lindbergh's flight, Tut-Ankh-Amen's tomb, "Yes, We Have No Bananas," mah jong, the crossword puzzle, the Democratic Convention at Madison Square Garden, "The Sidewalks of New York," Gloria Swanson's marrying a French Marquis and Floyd Collins dead in a Kentucky cave had come and gone.<sup>29</sup> Now the spotlight focused on evolution and God.

Tennessee had declared it "unlawful for any teacher in any of the universities, normals and all other public schools

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<sup>27</sup> I heard him during this period give his anti-evolution address to a thousand men in Detroit. He could hardly go on for their cheering. I felt as if I had been caught and shaken in an electric storm of murky passion.

<sup>28</sup> Cole, *op. cit.*, page 313.

<sup>29</sup> *Only Yesterday*, pages 190 *et seq.*

of the state, which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the state, to teach any theory that denies the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." John Thomas Scopes, a young high school teacher, made his bid for historic immortality and a test of the law by agreeing to tell his scholars the loose outlines of the evolutionary hypothesis. That would, it was suggested among other things, put Dayton, Tennessee, on the map, and it did.

The Civil Liberties Union sensed the significance of the trial. Clarence Darrow, Dudley Field Malone and Arthur Garfield Hays were assigned for Scopes's defense. Bryan rode out on his last crusade to defend the law, his faith and his God. He had in May, "wearing a long cape that swept to his heels and a wide brimmed hat," led the fight in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church at Columbus against Dr. Charles R. Erdman as candidate for Moderator, and lost—here was another sector of his far-flung line:

"I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,  
The best and the last!"

A Dayton schoolboy testified; Scopes had taught the earth was once a molten mass, then the land and sea had come, then vegetable life, then animal life began in the sea, then land life—animals, elephants, cats, dogs, horses, monkeys and men—all forms of life from the first cell.

Asked as to the effect of all this upon his religious convictions, Howard Morgan said it "hadn't hurt him any." The defense objected to the prayer of the presiding judge as likely to prejudice the jury. The legal effect of Charles Francis Potter's prayer was not in evidence. Passion played about the little courtroom like the waves of summer heat. Twelve unlettered hill-men were constituted a jury to decide the most momentous issue of modern thought. Revivalists held meet-

ings at night under the light of flares. "Be sure your sin will find you out" placarded at the courthouse gate warned the curious; motion picture operators fixed the action for the films; requests for "copy" came from the ends of the earth.<sup>80</sup>

Mencken—gathering material—fell off his chair: "A judgment," said one of the sisters; "the walls are falling in and Mr. Mencken will be the first to go. And he won't go to glory either." God and evolution faded into the background, Bryan and Darrow became the protagonists of the drama ("Bryan a prophet; Darrow a fiend," said John Roach Straton from his New York pulpit, July 20). Darrow spoke of Bryan's "fool religion," said he (Darrow) did not object to being called an agnostic but did object to being called an infidel. At the beginning of the trial Bryan had the crowd about him, Darrow was an avoided suspect. As the trial went on and Darrow's coat came off, the famous "suspenders" appeared and the sheer human quality of the man began to be felt; the crowd left Bryan and followed Darrow.<sup>81</sup>

The vaster issues of the trial were lost in the impossibility of the situation. Religion was dangerously in the way of being subjected to the one thing which, beyond opposition or persecution, imperils it; it was being made ridiculous. Darrow subjected Bryan to a merciless and mocking examination. Bryan spoke for seven columns of fine print. Evolution, he said, shut out God, denied the Bible, the resurrection of the body, and the supernatural, involved the virgin birth, the atonement. It left Jesus the Son of Joseph, "or some other co-respondent," lying in his unmarked Palestinian grave. He voiced again—though perhaps he knew it not—Matthew Arnold's perfect lament:

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<sup>80</sup> The issues of the *New York Herald Tribune* generally for the week of July 16, 1925. Also *Only Yesterday*, pages 202 *et seq.*

<sup>81</sup> So Mrs. Darrow told Edgar DeWitt Jones of Detroit.

## THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT

"Now he is dead! Far hence he lies  
In the lorn Syrian town;  
And on his grave, with shining eyes,  
The Syrian stars look down."

The Great Commoner's music was confused. It was left to Tom Stewart, the public prosecutor, to sound the one sincere, pathetic note of all the trial. "Why," he demanded, the tears starting and his arms outstretched as the tangent of the Cross, "have we not the right to bar science if it comes from the four corners of the earth to tear the vitals of our religion?" "If we bar that upon which man's eternal hope is founded, then our civilization is about to crumble. Tell me that I was once a common worm that writhed in the dust? No! Tell me that I came from the cell of the ass and the monkey? No! I want to go beyond this world where there is eternal happiness for me and others." "Who says we can't bar science that deprives us of all hope of the future life to come?" <sup>22</sup> *Sunt lacrimæ rerum*—there are the tears of things.

During the trial Bryan spoke one evening to a little company at a Tennessee mountain resort with no light but a dim lamp and the retreating lightnings of a distant storm. While the thunder punctuated his periods he once more and for the last time in the profession of his faith asserted his matchless power. It was as though Elijah had spoken while the horses and chariots of fire were speeding down for him through the outposts of the stars. Less than a week later he was dead. His great public career had been co-terminal with the stormy epoch of moral idealism in America. His Cross of Gold speech dated the beginning of it, his Tennessee valedictory dated the end of it.

Scopes was fined and his case appealed. Directly after a move was made to ban evolution from Washington, D. C., on

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<sup>22</sup> *New York Herald Tribune*, July 26, 1925.



the ground of disrespect to the Bible. That marked the furthestmost advance of the movement. On July 22 a British wireless phone had called a United States warship eight thousand miles away—science was still sovereign, the epoch of embattled moral idealism was over. America was getting ready to revise its liturgy: the Scopes trial marked the end of the age of *Amen* and the beginning of the age of *Oh yeah!*

## CHAPTER XI

### RELIGION AND PRINTER'S INK

WASHINGTON GLADDEN, whose training as a journalist gave him a sound appreciation of the religious value of printer's ink, complained, about the beginning of the century, that having had occasion to spend a Sunday in New York City he looked in vain through the most representative newspaper of the city for any notice of church services. The Church had not then generally discovered the value of newspaper publicity, and the newspaper had not generally discovered the news value of churches. Religion, Gladden added, constituted one of the major interests of life, and the activities of the churches were as significant as the activities—not at that period particularly mercurial—of the stock market. The situation, he thought, reflected no credit upon the intelligence of either religion or journalism.<sup>1</sup>

That statement should be conservatively qualified. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* had then the habit of publishing at length the sermons of the always brilliant preachers in Brooklyn pulpits, thus continuing the general division of labor between the two cities. New York assumed responsibility for the world and the flesh; Brooklyn the responsibility for the more spiritual interests of life, and their journals reflected this apportionment. The Monday sermon-supplement of the *Eagle* was widely advertised and subscribed for by many ministers who were thus kept in touch with the minds of their more distinguished brethren and supplied a stimulating material of which they, very likely, made some discreet use. The *Springfield Republican* published a sermon in full in its Sunday edition—a tribute to both the intelligence and piety of the lower

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<sup>1</sup> Said in substance to the writer.

Connecticut valley. The Boston *Saturday Transcript* with its rather specialized concern for higher things had, and has continued, a church page of high distinction which has been, through its inclusiveness, balance and discrimination, perhaps the outstanding church page in American journalism.

But the churches for the most part, when Gladden made his protest, did no more advertising than they could get for nothing. Neighborly village newspapers and the press of the larger towns and smaller cities have always been generous to the churches. Their more localized interests and the human interest of the Rev. John Doe, whom everybody knew, and the activities of the women's societies—where everybody was known—gave real news interest to church reports and announcements.<sup>2</sup> The metropolitan journals were then getting little or no revenue from the churches and repaid them in kind. It has always been possible, then, for a minister to "make the front page" or at least get a headline for some performance or pronouncement which had, according to the well known Dana formula, news value, but the general work of the churches and their ministry was carried on thirty years ago, as far as the secular press was concerned, in a holy obscurity. The art of religious publicity had not been discovered.

## I

Half way through the period covered by this study everything began to be changed: a new technique of church publicity was created, the relation between the churches and newspapers became in some instances almost embarrassingly intimate, printer's ink became an accredited means of grace. This also was an expression of the changing religious mind and habit which are the key to the history of religion in America from 1890 to 1930. As long as respectable Protestant America went

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<sup>2</sup> Our own local newspaper here in Auburn is typical. The church activities of this city of 38,000 inhabitants have a substantial place in its columns.

to church as a matter of course, faithfully if not always enthusiastically, the main thing was to have the church doors open a half hour before morning and evening services, the church itself reasonably warm in winter, the minister in the pulpit or assuringly accessible and the "quartet" in such recesses or upon such shelves as the ingenuity of the architect had provided. The result was automatic. The people furnished the congregation, the preacher the sermon and the choir individually or collectively praised God.

The sermon topic was rarely an affair of public concern—still more rarely of public agitation. The church had its established constituency and accredited place in the community. The high days of the Christian year were observed but not exploited, the evangelical denominations were still a little conservative about Lent and Good Friday. There was—and is—much to be said for so staid an order. The Catholic Church maintains it—though always with its age-old use of the Christian year, its own order and conception of worship. The Roman Catholic Church has always been sure of the publicity its centralized strength may desire or demand, and there are at this writing evidences of an extensive, effective and authoritative publicity department with the Vatican for its center. But that church needs and uses no paid advertising.

The Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States depend in a now unusual way upon their corporate strength. One of the outstanding Episcopal churches in New York advertises neither topic nor preacher. The free churches in England still carry on in quiet ways maintaining their tradition of supplying the congregation and asking from the minister only the finest preaching of which he is capable. The distinction of "free church" preaching in Great Britain is partly due to this division of labor.<sup>3</sup> Some-

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<sup>3</sup> The English free churches do advertise. They use particularly a form of poster advertising which would be considered in America rather startling.

thing of the same tradition long held in Canada. The Scottish kirk has made literature but never lived by publicity.

American churches began to advertise partly because of their excessive competition, partly because they began to feel some turn of the popular tide. The question of relative church attendance is difficult (though there are careful period studies). In my opinion churches are as well attended as they were in the days of Moody but the attendance is more uneven, harder to get and harder to maintain, having less stable social habit behind it and far more competition. There was, even so late as 1900, in the United States no engrossing alternatives of a Sunday to divine worship. The only bright lights in the streets of most American cities Sunday night were the church windows and, since they were likely "stained glass," even their light was subdued. The Sabbath still shut the devout up within its sacred barriers and offered no open road save to church doors. The social forces which were combining to break down all this inherited order were already in action but their cumulative influence was not yet clearly apparent though the second service began, at the turn of the century, to register strain.

The era of high pressure salesmanship was just then brightening the world with its dawn, and the fine art of advertisement being perfected. America was being made motor-minded, breakfast-food-minded, phonograph-minded; there seemed no reason why it might not be made religious-minded. The less conservative churches began to advertise. The influence of this adventure upon the churches, the newspapers, preaching and, possibly, religion has been far reaching. It has increased church budgets, created "religious" editors and new sections in newspapers, set preachers searching for sermon themes with advertising value. It has given a journalistic content to modern American preaching. The headlines of the week before have reappeared with some decorous deflation in Sunday's themes; the hope of furnishing a headline for Mon-

day has brightened the pastor's toil. At the best this *rapprochement* of the pulpit and the press has related religion to the vital enterprise of society. At its worst it has encouraged sensationalism, led to not infrequent lapses from devout good taste and resulted in unchristian competition.

The historian of the future may also conclude that it secularized religion at a most critical period to the spiritual damage of a society which needed, for its own salvation, a church nobly aloof from sterile superficialities and correcting, through its own steadfastness to the highest values of life, the limitations of an age which was dangerously in the way of losing sight of them altogether. He may also conclude that the churches, through this alliance with the secular mind, intensified the very qualities against which they protested.

## II

That may be left to the suppositious historian. Publicity has kept the churches and probably religion in the public mind as never before, and became significant enough to create specialists, a current literature,<sup>4</sup> and furnish an ample subject matter for books.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Leach's study sets out the scope and complexity of church publicity. The vehicles are the weekly "calendar" of the local church, indoor and outdoor bulletin boards, parish papers, circulars, year books, letters, blotters, tickets, window cards, hand-made posters, street car advertising, motion pictures, the radio, announcements in hotels, circulars and such other devices as consecrated ingenuity can discover and use. Publicity-minded religion advertises first the local church, second coöperative church enterprises and third evangelistic and crusade campaigns.

<sup>4</sup> For example, *Church Management*, William H. Leach, editor, a periodical published in Cleveland, Ohio.

<sup>5</sup> *Church and Newspaper*—William Bernard Norton, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1930; *Church Publicity*, William H. Leach, Cokesbury Press, Nashville, 1930.

The local church has used bulletin boards, display "ads" and as much useful mention as it can get from "religious editors" in the church news sections of the press. Bulletin boards burgeoned nobly in the decade following the war. They have been a study in evolution. American churches existed for generations in a proud anonymity. They needed no more than Canterbury or Notre Dame to name themselves. A Latin cross golden in the morning light meant a Catholic church, a Greek cross and ivy an Episcopal church, spacious and solid hewn stone was likely Presbyterian, Corinthian columns Congregational. Their communicants knew where and what they were, the rest of the world could find out by asking. In time a modest sign—likely to be half lost in ivy—announced the name of the church, its hours of service and the minister's name. Provision was made for changing this last feature without disturbing the rest. The sexton's name and address were also sometimes added for the convenience of the living who wanted to enter the church during secular hours and of the dead if the sexton offered the services of an undertaker.

The invention of a board with movable type revolutionized this order. The bulletin board moved out in front and announced—still modestly—the Sunday topics. The electric-lighted board, clock controlled, came next, topped by a cross flashing and darkened, and beneath in letters of light the minister and his themes. No one could miss a church so glorified. If this were not enough, posters lettered in black and red announced choir programs, cantatas, special services and bravely supplemented the relative reticence of the bulletin board.<sup>6</sup> So enterprising a church might in addition have left its calendars in the mail boxes of apartment houses, sent out hundreds of mimeographed letters, invited hotel guests to share its worship—all this besides its newspaper publicity.

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<sup>6</sup> Woodward Avenue, Detroit, for example, the week before Easter, 1932.

A study of the related church-news and church-advertisement pages of the newspapers of the larger American cities would supply the future historian with fascinating material. The changing phases of the religious mind, the play of interest and incident, the use and disappearance of outstanding pulpit personalities are registered there in a way to make any era alive. Nicholas Murray Butler, so the *New York Times* reported in March, 1921, saw Christianity more opposed and endangered than for eighteen hundred years. I. M. Haldeman offered to answer such questions as: "Is there a city as real as New York in Heaven to which Christians go when they die?" "Will Christ dwell in Jerusalem?" "Will He find the Roman Empire in the League of Nations?" Rabbi Stephen S. Wise denounced lipsticks and wine in a sermon on "Nice People." Rabbi Marius Ranson believed that Moses would enforce the dry law if he were in the White House.

Monday, March 28, 1921, the *Times* reported great crowds in the churches for Easter. Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., attended the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church with three children, and Mr. Rockefeller offered the opening prayer for the Young Men's Bible Class. Dr. Manning said the great note of Easter was the "absolute and unshakable certainty of the resurrection." A liberal preacher wanted (in December, 1925) "to clothe the power of youth of today with the power of the superman. . . . For practical purposes the idea of the superman should take the place of the idea of the incarnation." The Rev. John Haynes Holmes listed as a man's greatest possessions, "a job, a hobby, a friend, a hero and a cause." Dr. Haldeman said that the great planets are inhabited by a race of men a little higher than our own. Other ministers blamed the church for class feeling, or wanted art to enrich worship, or asked for wider Bible study, or expected a spiritual revival, or were skeptical of church unity.



A week later the metropolitan pulpit held the present age to be one of religion, said church unity was nearer, and that doubt is the necessary foil of faith. Judge Ben Lindsey was discussed variously. Witch burning in Massachusetts came in for notice in spite of the fact no witch was burned in Massachusetts. Jesus was described as a cultivated man; man, it was said, needed God and the time was in danger. Dr. Ralph W. Sockman deprecated "the incendiary speech of Admiral Plunkett." Dr. John Roach Straton, whose habitual outlook was usually gloomy, saw, he said, distinct grounds for hope that Mayor-elect James Walker would make New York spotless.<sup>7</sup>

"The old ideas of hell," so Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, reported January 28, 1928, "as a fiery pit, biblical stories like that of Jonah and the whale and the fiat theory of creation are all examples of the ephemeral side of Christianity." "Everything changes about religion except religion." "Only in the Catholic church," said the Rev. John Hickey at St. Joseph's, "can the preacher come out in all force and tell the people there is a hell." The attendance of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and his sons is again noted at Fifth Avenue Baptist. The venerable Anagarika Dharmapala in flame-colored robes and from the pulpit of the Community Church "gently rebuked the followers of the Christ for their failure to live up to the tenets of His teachings."

On March 7, 1932, the *Times* gave five columns to the sermons of the previous Sunday. The Rev. Lon Ray Call had offered a modern version of the Ten Commandments, Dr. J. F. Newton said a whole way of thinking was passing away. The Rev. J. Fulton Sheen condemned humanism as purely a worship of abstractions. Bishop Manning blamed a "bold and active propaganda against both religion and morals in not a few of our colleges and universities for the present weakening

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<sup>7</sup> All this from the dated issues of the *New York Times*.

of moral standards . . . the great increase of crime . . . the callous and cynical indifference to plainly exposed corruption." "If we gave a fraction of the time," Dr. Ralph Sockman had said, "to improving the technique of Christian living that we do toward improving our game of golf at least it would show we had the interests of the Church at heart."

I have cited these reports at a little length because they represent fairly enough what aspects of religion an outstanding newspaper had during the ten years from 1922 to 1932 considered news. The great constants are naturally not reported, the deliverances so honored do represent the more arresting variations from the general course of preaching. The critical is far more likely to be reported than the commendatory. If a minister "flayed" something or other, he was generally sure of publicity. I should doubt if an entirely fair perspective of the general mind and conduct of the churches for the decade can be gained from the general current of newspaper reports.

### III

Detroit during this same period supplied an admirable material for a study of paid church publicity. The city was growing immoderately and its excess of a prosperous and socially unassimilated population made it an advertiser's paradise. There was a hemorrhage of printer's ink. Merchants, manufacturers, realtors were with such assistance climbing golden stairs; the churches joined the procession. The interests of the Detroit churches were institutional rather than theological. (The religious seismograph registered only minor tremors in Detroit during the fundamentalist controversy.) The city had a strong ministry many of whom added to unusual preaching power a gift for organization, the Council of Churches was directed by a secretary of great resource, tireless energy and a genius for publicity. He must, whenever he

recited the Apostles Creed, have silently added—either before or after “the Communion of the Saints”—“and the power of printer’s ink.”

The laymen of the churches would certainly and fervently have answered “Amen” to any such creedal addition for they supported the publicity programs of their churches generously. The advertisements were either denominational group or individual church advertisements. Efforts were made to secure interdenominational coöperation for a publicity which would urge church attendance and support through a united presentation of the cause of religion to the city, but they failed. The Protestant churches in Philadelphia did just that, probably about 1913 or 1914 (I am not sure of the exact date). I believe the Philadelphia plan to have been the most Christian use of publicity which any fellowship of American churches has made; it was creatively right and very telling.

Detroit churches took their own rather lonely lines. The forms of the advertisements were standardized—they announced the church, the minister, his themes and as much of the music as there was space for. The church and the minister were constants—at least the church was; the themes, the set-up and the space supplied the variants. The least a church could do with was one-half inch, single column. Most churches felt their opportunity for doing good sadly restricted by so little space, and the newspapers encouraged them in that belief. The half inch became an inch, two inches, three; double columns began to be used, large type, capitals. The more judicious found themselves committed to a competition they deplored, the more exuberant let themselves go—it was a holy cause. On March 20, 1920, the *Detroit News* carried one hundred and eighteen paid advertisements on the church page.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This advertising measured one hundred forty-seven single-column inches, 12¼ feet. The rate was then \$4.80 an inch with “a discount not determinable from the records.” Without the discount the churches paid that issue of the

Some of them were denominational group displays; the more arresting were double column with headline type. In spite of this display the Council of Churches reported as a result of survey, carried through for the Interchurch World Movement, that "Detroit's soul is fast dying." The aliens, it was reported, suspected every American institution except the public schools. The recently arrived populations, mostly from villages or small towns, existed as individuals or families, having no group life; a dozen nationalities and races were in one block in Highland Park—Indians, Poles, Hungarians, Negroes, etc. Few of them voted; they were the pathetically *déraciné* whom the industrial enterprises of the city had assembled for their own profit or convenience and left morally bewildered and economically insecure.

## IV

This situation complicated the religious life of all industrial America, and Detroit felt it more keenly than most cities. It was not fair, however, to say that Detroit's soul was fast dying. That city struggled valiantly to keep the higher values of life alive, through its schools, its libraries, its music, its art and its churches. The churches themselves did everything they could; their excessive and competitive publicity was at least unselfishly motivated. A study of topics during this period shows no excess of the bizarre save in one or two cases. But as one turns, in 1932, the already yellowing files of the newspaper church pages for the ten years before, the result is depressing. The advertisements were too vociferous, the pages are still strained with a tension which does not belong to effective religion.

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*News* \$705.60. March 15, 1924, there were one hundred fifty-two inches at \$5.20 an inch, total \$790.40. At least half the churches were at that time advertising in the *Detroit Free-Press*, some of them in a third journal. I should think during the winter of 1924 Detroit churches were spending at least \$1,200 a week for newspaper publicity; circulars, posters, cards, etc., not included.

The advertisements of St. Mark's Methodist Church during this period represent, perhaps, the most astoundingly resourceful and sensational form which church advertising has taken. The church had for its nearest competitor one of the most blatant, blazing amusement parks in the Interior and for its then minister one of the few men in America who could meet such competition. The Rev. William L. Stidger added to a poetic genius which secured for his verse a permanent place in mystic poetry, an engaging naiveté, great faculty of popular address, a breathtaking audacity, a flair for the currents of the popular mind which would have made him an extremely successful journalist, any amount of resource and a wealth of warm though somewhat incalculable human nature.

His advertisements reflected it all. He focused his peculiar genius upon his Sunday night services and was able to announce that "for twenty-six consecutive nights people have been turned away from St. Mark's for want of room." He began when the church was full, often an hour before the announced time. He delighted in illuminated pictures, lighted and revolving crosses, the unsparing denunciation of the commissioner of police, trumpeters, vice revelations, drama sermons, echo singing, devout whistling. He brought in Edwin Markham and Chautauqua entertainers, devised "pulpit editorial" and symphonic preaching. He rarely did with less than six inches of paid space. Such churches as could manage it christened themselves anew: "The Church with a Welcome," "The Church with a Thousand Welcomes," "The Church Around the Corner." Stidger outbid them all.

His was "The BIG Church with the BIG Heart and the BIG Crowds." "The revolving cross outside," he announced, "indicates that there are IDEAS inside." The fire marshal warned St. Mark's that it was violating city ordinances, the police found Stidger-bound cars obstructing traffic. The Pastor of St. Mark's rejoiced, in his next advertisement, that the at-

tendance upon his ministration had attracted the attention of the Detroit fire and police departments. Stidger's *joi de vivre* finally led him to a characterization of some of his more conservative fellow-craftsmen, the humor of which the gentlemen so denominated did not entirely appreciate. His advertisements thereafter took on a somewhat chastened tone. He left Detroit within two years—for a theological seminary in Boston and a pulpit once occupied by Edward Everett Hale.

The writer, who found his own church displays among the rest, may be permitted to wonder what actually came of it all. In his judgment the churches are now about what their essential force and right usefulness would have made them with a far less extravagant propaganda. Any church has within its four walls the best advertising medium in the world—the interest, enthusiasm or loyalty of its own people. A ministry like that of Phillips Brooks will extend itself without a drop of printer's ink. Merton Stacher Rice of the Metropolitan Church in Detroit, who had the largest following in the city during the period of excessive advertising, and deservedly, did far less advertising than his contemporaries. Modern extravagant church publicity has itself been a symptom of the disease it undertook to cure.

The churches perfected themselves as best they could in the art of publicity. Newspapers did what they could to make news of religion. Ministers sent the more arresting parts of their sermons to the local press, supplied, with some solicitation, their photographs and looked for and at the result Monday morning. It was sometimes disappointing—no sermon, no cut; sometimes surprising—both the sermon and the "cut" being unrecognizable. Even very good sermons were hard to headline and the period demanded strong meat in its newspapers. Sports usually followed religion in the standardized "make-up." The nation had discovered golf, Bobby Jones was "putting" himself into a golfer's immortality; Walter

Hagen was paid what you please for simply being among those present. Football was what a college or university had been founded for. Young men with a magical capacity for eluding interference on the "gridiron" got writer's cramp from signing movie contracts. While Gene Tunney took an unusually long count in a prize fight, "five Americans dropped dead of heart failure at their radios."<sup>9</sup> It required a nice art to set religion to a music like that.

"Religious editors" did their best. Some of them were men of high motive, scrupulous fairness and an entirely adequate acquaintance with the detail of their demanding subject matter. Others were young men of a carefree disposition who—to use a Wodehouse comparison—did not "know an alb from a reredos." Such as these took sermons apart and put them together again in ways which pained their authors and were occasionally guilty of pure fabrication. Yet I believe the churches to have been treated as fairly by the press as any other contemporaneous interest.<sup>10</sup> They have been given more space in the average newspaper than education. Journals which have dealt unfairly with church news have done the same or worse for other interests of high importance. Contacts between ministers and journalists have probably been as happy as the contacts between journalists and bankers, or between ministers and their official boards. And very likely both have profited thereby. But the essential contradiction between their vocations has not been reconciled.

## V

There is in America a long history of religious journals established to report the activities, promote the interests, shape the policies and edify the spirits of their respective denominations. They belonged (in their golden age) to a world of

<sup>9</sup> *Only Yesterday*, page 210.

<sup>10</sup> For a judicious discussion of the whole matter, see Norton, *Church and Newspaper*, *op. cit.*

center tables, kerosene lamps, "base burners" and the-whole-family-at-home-after-dark. Very good families as late as the 1880's "took" very few periodicals. The uncensored reading (and uncensored reading then required an alert ingenuity) of the young was mostly confined to dime novels of incredible adventure and impeccable morality. Maturity was even more limited. The news-stand with its multi-colored, multi-named and multi-moraled display did not exist; a religious periodical was meant for the whole family, and long winter drives to the post office were brightened by the expectation of finding it in the family box.

It was likely then to be privately owned and modestly profitable. An editor of genius would give his "weekly" real distinction, otherwise its piety was standardized but it was grateful, for all that, to a society whose church loyalty was both steadfast and standardized. Three answers to a questionnaire sent out during the Men and Religion Forward Movement indicate the esteem in which denominational journalism was held in 1912: "Its religious tone has a steadying effect. I should think a Christian would feel more lost among others of his kind without his church paper than a business man or manufacturer without his trade organ." "Keeps me posted as to conditions in my church at home and abroad, gives inspirations to more faithful church service, wholesome Christian articles calculated to cleaner, holier living, a guide to right and healthful social life." "Helps keep me decent as a Christian."<sup>11</sup>

A minister who did not perhaps need his church paper to maintain his spiritual tone was kept informed on general denominational affairs. He might also see his own name in its columns, or else it would take an article from him or publish as a kind of accolade one of his sermons. Stronger denominations had more than one journal conducting brisk engagements

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<sup>11</sup> *Men and Religion Messages*, Vol. VII; "The Church and the Press," page 114.



from opposed viewpoints about some one of the multitude of things which can divide good Christians. Methodism standardized its official journalism in regional *Christian Advocates*.<sup>12</sup> When a denomination could afford only one journal, the editor was possibly chosen, among other things, for his ability to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. Changing conditions affected religious journalism. The center table began to give way to the radio or else became covered with a literature by the side of which the decorous cover of a church paper seemed depressed.

Editors grew depressed also and the business grew unprofitable. Periodicals of long and honorable standing went out of circulation. The survivors were mostly subsidized by their supporting denominations and their editorial pages reflected the change. The editors of such official journals are about the only members of their craft who ever apologize, retract or explain. This lends an unusual Christian character to their editorials—but their pungency sometimes suffers. On the whole, however, such papers are well edited, resourceful and, collectively, they influence public opinion. Religious journalism is also about the only remaining form of journalism in which a publication of distinction and power can be built—if periodicals are built—around a personality. Each American generation beginning before the Civil War has produced at least one man of genius in this field.

While his force lasted and his touch was sure, the journal he edited exercised an almost pontifical authority. Such journals have always outgrown their denominational affiliations—if they had any to begin with. They have been the organs of ideals, opinions and issues common to one wing of all the churches. A genius for anticipating such ideals and opinions or issues before they have taken pattern form, and becoming their

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<sup>12</sup> The *New York Times*, May 22, 1932, noted drastic changes in their regional groupings.

voice and champion has been the secret of editorial ascendancy. The editors who have had this genius have been blessed also with a gift to get business men to back their venture and vision. The editor usually got the glory but in the final auditing of human enterprises his financial backers should come in for some especial recognition.

## VI

The *Independent*, *The Outlook* and *The Christian Century* have been the outstanding religious periodicals of the period here considered. The *Independent* was the pioneer in its field. It began as a folio blanket sheet in 1848—a militant organ in a militant age,<sup>18</sup> and the voice of the Northern anti-slavery conscience. It was nominally Congregational through the denominational standing of its three editors, Leonard Bacon, Joseph P. Thompson and Richard Salter Storrs, but it was less an advocate of Congregationalism “than of liberty and reform in theology and public affairs.” It took a hard line which demanded less actual courage from its editors than from Henry C. Bowen, a high-minded New York merchant who carried it through stormy years at great cost to himself and a still greater risk to his business, which had extensive Southern connections.

The *Independent* associated with itself through the course of its history a most distinguished list of editors and contributors. It published the sermons of Henry Ward Beecher, whose very name had then a magical appeal; he wrote the “Star Papers” for it, edited it from 1861 to 1863. The *Independent* inherited and amplified the for-every-member-of-the-family tradition of the religious journal. A representative issue in its mellow maturity began with the survey of a world in which “populists” and “silverites” were candidates for the United States Senate, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt just elected Gov-

<sup>18</sup> For accounts of the first fifty years of the *Independent*, see “The Early Years of the *Independent*,” Richard Salter Storrs, Vol. 50, page 1627. “Fifty Years of the *Independent*,” William Hayes Ward, pages 1654-1642. “Thirty-eight Years in the *Independent*,” Theodore L. Cuyler, page 1659.

ernor of New York, Lord Salisbury suspicious of the Czar's peace propaganda, the Emperor William concluding a pious pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the United States discussing Philippine independence.

Agnes Repplier reported a new interest in Byron and his poetry. A physician discussed American surgery in the Cuban War. There was a little story about Indians and an Irish fairy story, some "Fresh Facts About Tennyson," studies of Albert Pike's Southern poetry, Manila prisons whose doors the United States was just then opening, and "The Lost Name of Our God." Art was considered in Puvis De Chavannes, music in Max Alvary and science in Yellowstone Park geology. There were pages of book reviews and religious intelligence. Wisely tempered editorials, finance, "Pebbles" (being humoresques of the period), puzzles and personals end a November issue in 1898.

The *Independent* did just this with a clear reflection of what the changing tides of time carried for almost three-quarters of a century. It would be easily possible to write from its pages an entirely adequate history of American religion during the long period of which it could say, "all of which I saw and part of which I was." William Hayes Ward, its last great editor, belongs to the elect fellowship of religious editors and brought to his station a grace of spirit which endeared him to all who knew him. He needed in his old age strong glasses through which he peered inquiringly. But his inner vision was always clear and he saw far and much.

## VII

In 1866 Mr. Beecher and the *Independent*—Mr. Tilton who succeeded Beecher as editor speaking—disagreed about reconstruction. Tilton was brilliant, erratic and wore the long hair which in that period indicated a generally advanced position. Beecher was more brilliant, less erratic and his hair—

also worn long—was beginning to be touched with white, but he was not radical enough on reconstruction to suit Tilton. The whole nation was distracted by the question; one more passage-at-arms was a detail, but, indirectly, this one created *The Outlook*. The *Independent* discontinued the publication of Beecher's sermons, he terminated his relationship with the journal and J. B. Ford and Company started *The Christian Union*. Beecher became its editor-in-chief and in a year the new journal had 30,000 subscribers. Abbott inherited both Plymouth pulpit and *The Christian Union*. Even so late as 1890 it was an engaging small "blanket" sheet, brightened by Abbott's sermons, his literary touch, his liberal theology and the twilight afterglow of Victorian idealism. The times were then ripe for a more ambitious project, and *The Christian Union* became *The Outlook*.<sup>14</sup> For a decade and a half *The Outlook* was a liberal-Protestant-American institution. These were also the great years of the *British Weekly* under Robertson Nicoll. Religious journalism was never more brilliantly served, and the two between them made outstanding contributions to literature as well as to the religious and social mind of English-speaking people.

American periodical literature was, then, in its second phase. The photo-engraving made attractive illustration possible, paper was cheap and printer's ink had not yet been cheapened. The *Ladies' Home Journal* had discovered the profitable art of supporting a popular publication by advertising. *McClure's* and *The American* furnished good fiction and alluring disclosures of municipal corruption. Investigators in that inexhaustible field were not yet "muck-rakers"; they were earnest-minded servants of the public good. For the first time in America a clever writer could make a good living from a roving pen. *The Outlook* more than held its own in this field.

<sup>14</sup> The writer saw and somewhat mourned the change, being young then and deeply influenced by Abbott, and having the natural conservatism of youth.

The issue for May 28, 1910, announces Lyman Abbott, Editor-in-Chief; Hamilton W. Mabie, Associate Editor; and Theodore Roosevelt, Contributing Editor. It notes impressively the funeral of King Edward VII, that Philander C. Knox, Secretary of State, has addressed an identical note to the powers asking their coöperation in the establishment of a world court. It is concerned about conservation and "Trinity tenements" and why a comet behaves as it does. A "race in the air" is described, there are photographs of King George V and Queen Mary, an article on "Animals of our National Parks" superbly illustrated and "Scenery as a National Asset" the happy nation not being then much disturbed about its other assets. An illustrated study of John W. Alexander, painter; a travel experience in Spain and a woman's ascent of the Matterhorn are vividly described. Frank Marshall White writes hopefully about "The Epoch of the Child." A poem or two fills in. *The Outlook* lost prestige after the war. The editorial genius of Lyman Abbott was not inherited by his successor. *The Outlook* kept its name but changed its character and ceased to be a religious journal.

As *The Outlook* diminished, *The Christian Century* under the brilliant editorship of Charles Clayton Morrison increased. Dr. Morrison belonged to the rare succession of creative editors in religious journalism, and *The Christian Century* became the expression of his many-sided force and unfailing resources. It was "the journalistic culmination, in a sense, of the *Christian Oracle* which began to be published in 1884 in Des Moines, Iowa, as the state organ of the Disciples denomination. It was moved to Chicago in 1892, became the general organ of the denomination"<sup>18</sup> and was renamed *The Christian Century* in 1900. Dr. H. L. Willett edited it till 1908. After that *The Christian Century* and Morrison made history between them.

The early financial history of the journal was difficult.

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<sup>18</sup> From a very gracious letter from Dr. Morrison.

Its contributors had only the glory of their names—always in clear, large print—on its cover but they included the outstanding personnel of the forward-minded clergy of America. Denominational lines were ignored and *The Christian Century*, through the vigor of its editorial policy, became the general organ of the like-minded section of all the churches. The subtitle of it was "A Journal of Religion" and it confined itself to that field as the *Independent* and *The Outlook* had never done. Not that it was unworldly—far from it. Most of the doings of the planet came up in its pages for benediction (always grateful) or castigation (always effective). There may on the whole have been more castigation than benediction. No editor—even a religious one—escapes his characteristic loyalties and inheritances. The characteristic loyalties and inheritances of the editor of *The Christian Century* could occasionally be traced through its issues.

The journal supported free inquiry, took advanced theological position, committed itself without reservation to the social gospel and became the most militant single crusader against the war system that intrenched interest had to reckon with after the World War. It wrote "the outlawry of war" across its banners and kept it there until the editor saw the Kellogg Pact voted by the United States Senate and signed by the compacting nations in Paris. No journal can probably be credited with so effective a share in that enterprise.

The resource of its editors has been outstanding as well as their ability to anticipate and direct currents of religious interest. Its weekly issues reported the course of religion and righteousness from the principal American cities and from England. Dr. Abbott's technique of the reconciliation of opposed positions on a more inclusive level has not been Morrison's method, he has been more incisively aggressive. His list of associate editors and contributors has included the best-known names in many departments in the English-speaking world.

No history of American religion from 1920 to 1930 could be written without acknowledging its influence. A representative issue (May 8, 1924) features "Our Pagan Idea of Property," a meeting of the English Conference on Politics and Citizenship, a study of the Church in Rural Ohio, news of the Christian World and extensive book reviews. The editorial comment is pungent and provocative. I should think *The Christian Century's* endeavor to mold the minds of ministers through their reading one of its outstanding features.

In 1930 (or '31) Daniel A. Poling and Stanley High, with then ample support, took the old *Christian Herald*, made a monthly of it, dressed it up in bright colors, illustrated it profusely and achieved a publication which could hold its own on any news-stand. The issue of May, 1932, had a picture cover in colors, "popular" advertisements judiciously censored, and such articles as "With Lindbergh at the Outpost of Christianity," "Edwin Markham on His Eightieth Birthday" and "A London Bobby Looks at Prohibition." It also featured short stories with an indirect moral and religious approach, cuts of religious leaders then in the public eye, the family altar and vocational guidance. Rector suggested menus for church banquets, a new occupation for a famous restaurateur; Seth Parker and his Jonesport folks had a full page of advertisement.

Many denominational papers by 1932 reflected the influence of the popular publications in format, color-printing and illustrations. Recent Presbyterian publications are an example; also the type form of *The Christian Century* has influenced other religious journals.

## VIII

Most of the books in the library of a well-read minister bore, in 1890, the imprint of one of three or four publishing houses. The books themselves were of a solid sort on inherited themes: Old Testament history, New Testament history, church

history, church polity, theology, Biblical criticism, commentaries, the philosophy of religion, comparative religion and whatever else the complete minister ought to know. They were all written by "accredited scholars," the majority of whom had German visés on their intellectual passports. Untranslated German quotations lent distinction to their lighter pages, references to the church fathers (necessary or merely to add impressiveness) were always backed up by the Latin quotation. The average ministerial erudition has never been more subtly complimented.<sup>16</sup>

They were offered mostly in series. Charles Scribner's Sons of New York in association with T. & T. Cook of Edinburgh proposed to publish forty-six volumes of an International Critical Commentary which would "be abreast of modern Biblical scholarship and in a measure lead its van." The same house published the *International Theological Library* "designed to cover the whole field of Christian theology." A. C. Armstrong and Son offered *The Expositor's Bible*, a series to "contain expository lectures on ALL THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE by the foremost preachers and theologians of the day." Hastings's massive Bible dictionaries were on the press, his still more massive *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* was being organized. A minister could secure any or all this literature by merely signing his name to printed forms. Thereafter he had nothing to do but wait for the books which had a disconcerting way of being delivered when he had probably forgotten the transaction and more probably was not prepared to pay for them.

All this was of undebatable value. The new scholarship demanded an almost entire recasting of basal religious literature. While America was changing the horse-drawn "buggy"

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<sup>16</sup> I have always wondered who read the proof. It was a tricky task; a misplaced curve in an Arabic citation would wreck an argument or ruin a reputation.



for the motor-driven car, religion was doing something as fundamental in its own field. Publishers who specialized in the religious field were busy as a Cadillac or Ford factory. The best of the world's scholarship combined to produce their religious literature. If the books came slowly to the subscriber, it was because it took a long time to make them. Students put a life-work into two volumes. Some of them are as near final in their field as any human creation can be.<sup>17</sup>

But they needed a deal of resmelting, being often stubborn ore, before they could reach the intelligent general mind. Even ministers were happier for having them somewhat simplified. The man-in-the-street (which condescending phrase appeared about the same time) never heard of them. They were worse than caviar to the intelligent layman, for he was getting used to caviar. If he wanted a religious book he might reread *Ben Hur*, *Robert Elsmere*, *Pilgrim's Progress* or else the more pious publications of his denominational publishing house.

These specialized in literature of a more ephemeral sort. They published the sermons of better known preachers cautiously—and usually at a loss; essays and studies with a religious trend, a good many books about the Bible. Preachers like Abbott and Gladden made books of their informative Sunday evening addresses. Thoughtful preachers—who could find a publisher—published at least one book into which they put the meditation of a lifetime. These dealt commonly with phases of Christian faith or conduct, they were mellow and good and have stood the test of time surprisingly. It was still possible to find unpreempted territory and deal commandingly with ruling ideas. Such books went further toward shaping the minds of young ministers than the erudition of the commentators.

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<sup>17</sup> E.g., Robert H. Charles's two critical volumes on the Book of Revelation. The labor and learning of such books are almost beyond conceiving.

Specification is ungracious but Fleming H. Revell was a pioneer in general religious publishing for the devout, evangelical mind. The house had the prestige of Northfield connection and published the Bible studies, devotional addresses and meditative religious writings of many of the men whom D. L. Moody and later William Revell Moody brought to the Northfield conferences. These men were widely known and read in Great Britain and America. It was difficult at that period (1895 to 1910 or 1912) for a writer without established reputation to find a publisher for sermons. Even those who approached a denominational publishing house needed to carry a prayer rug from which humbly to address their petitions for editorial consideration.

Fleming H. Revell actually looked about for manuscripts and authors. He encouraged the young and aspiring and was, I suspect, one of the earliest publishers to discover the lucrative secret of mass production in the religious field. He was also a very gracious gentleman whom all who had any dealings with his house remember gratefully. The beginner shared the risk by some sacrifice in royalties on the first thousand and very often there was never a second thousand. But who cared about royalties when the proof of his first book was coming in? Even the printer's errors had a golden sheen.

Revell trained capable men in the technique of publishing and selling extensive religious lists. George H. Doran, thus trained, formed his own company which was for years distinguished for its religious literature and brought to Doubleday, Doran and Co. at the time of the merger of the two companies an outstanding list of religious titles and an established prestige. Meanwhile Mr. Doran had trained young men who were by 1930 men of influence either in new publishing firms specializing in religious books or in general literature. Older houses—such as Harper's and Macmillan's and Henry Holt—

strengthened their religious book department.<sup>18</sup> New firms were organized in the South and in Chicago. What came of all this was not a renaissance; it was a vigorous and creative departure in the long history of religious literature. Religious books became "best sellers," the total output followed fiction—not too far behind<sup>19</sup>—and in the competition for manuscripts the publisher carried the prayer rug.

## IX

Many forces combined to produce this marvelous burgeoning of religious literature between 1920 and 1930. First of all, the general interest in religion. The variety of its development, the significance of its controversies, the disturbances of its inherited status had reached the popular mind. I do not know—nor I suspect does anyone—how generally lay-folk read the generality of the new type of religious book; probably not extensively—but they were beginning to read for themselves. The ministry was anxious, teachable and eager for anything which could be turned into sermons. The times were prosperous. Book Clubs stimulated sales. Every self-respecting parson wanted to hold his own in a game which is likely as old as the clay tablets of Babylon—"Have you read . . . ?"

I should think, however, that a new constituency for religious books has been either discovered or created—probably both—which included for the first time the inquiring lay mind. Certainly books of a more general religious interest dealing with psychology, the history of religions and the bearings of

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<sup>18</sup> I should not perhaps have begun with names at all. No list is complete without The Abingdon Press, The Cokesbury Press, or Willett, Clark & Co. The Oxford Press, of course, is classic. The University Presses were the media of the specialist. The Association Press has published some of the most widely read religious books of the entire period. The strictly denominational houses have lost prestige or else broadened their tests.

<sup>19</sup> *The Publishers' Weekly* furnishes statistics on this point. Titles in 1928: Religious 766, Fiction 1135, Juvenile 634, Biographies 640. 1929: (in the same order) 742, 1340, 788, 667. 1930: 776, 1348, 1771, 699. 1931: 738, 1272, 873, 699.

science upon belief have had an increased secular sale. Advertising and reviewing helped enormously. Jackets became intriguing works of modernistic and futuristic art, the "blurb" a tone-poem, advertisement went to the limit of truth and type. Religious periodicals were multiplied and gave extensive space to reviewing. America was made religious-book-minded.

The books themselves were of a new quality and violated an old tradition. The learned have long had a distrust of style; wisdom, they held, should go abroad in sober garments. They were the guardians of mysteries to be defended, at almost any cost of dusty writing, from the taint of "popularity." American religious scholarship was, until after the war, under the spell of German technique; one-quarter of a page text, three-quarters notes, and say it sadly. The art of France, which combines brilliancy, lucidity and the soundest of scholarship on a noteless page, was neglected—or ignored. This tradition haunted, until the end of the period, the American equivalent of academic groves and was especially cherished in theological circles. It has influenced professional theological reviewing which still looks condescendingly at the books most preachers are reading, dismisses them with "shorter notice" and confines itself seriously to critical interchanges in a highly rarefied atmosphere.

The new religious literature was mostly interpretive. Some of the "best sellers" of the period have been Fosdick's *The Meaning of Prayer*, *The Meaning of Faith* and *The Manhood of the Master*; Stanley Jones's *The Christ of the Indian Road* and H. R. L. Sheppard's *The Impatience of a Parson*. Much of this literature has left "sources" to the specialist and has undertaken to make the results of his work available to the general mind of his time. He was not always as grateful as he should have been; possibly the freer touch of the interpreter pained him, perhaps he resented the invasion of his monopoly, very likely he did not sense the gap between his fulness of

technical knowledge and even the intelligent mind of his time.<sup>20</sup>

Streeter has said, I think, that the learning of one generation of Oxford scholars was lost to the world because they would publish nothing until they knew everything about it. The generation of writers here considered wrote under no such inhibitions. They used what they had and left it to be corrected by time, the critic or the next book. The results were unexpectedly good—a vital fluidity of mind, an engaging give-and-take. Learning came alive as art came alive in the Florence of the Medicis or philosophy on the streets of Socrates's Athens. Religion came alive with the rest.

The course of religious literature—or literature about religion—has reflected the changing phases of thought during the four decades ending in 1930. It was in the beginning mostly occupied with the Bible, with a strong marginal interest in the cults, Christian Science and New Thought. The war created a pathetic interest in spiritualism; the quest for a sign from the great silence so suddenly made populous created a literature in itself. For a while the book shops piled up books by F. W. H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, Conan Doyle, Hyslop and Barrett. Then they were gone—perhaps those who read them grew tired of questioning a silence which answered only with enigmas—or silence. That interest still holds rather strongly in England. They have had so many more in the silence.

In 1920 or thereabouts social-application-of-Christianity books led all the rest. The reconstruction-of-Christianity, it was felt, would be in this field or nowhere. The psychological approach to religion had lain fallow for a decade, save in its applications to religious education. Some percolation of Freud and psychoanalysis irrigated the fallow field, and a new litera-

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<sup>20</sup> Something should be said here of the "Quarterlies" which deal with life and religion. They are extremely significant.

ture sprang up almost overnight. A few men of great insight popularized—and very helpfully—those ways of living with oneself through which religion might again become vital. The books of the end of the period have specialized in the adjustment of doubts as to the reality of religion itself and have begun to focus significantly upon the nature and reality of God. The reconciliation of science and religion has, of course, created a very great literature in which the contributions of the scientists themselves were most significant. Eddington, Jeans and Whitehead have secured a reputation in this region which made them more influential in shaping free religious thought than the theologians. A flurry in "Humanism" was, in the language of the Stock Exchange, short-lived. More volumes of sermons were published, I suspect, from 1920 to 1930 than in any half century since preaching began, and naturally any number of books on preaching.

## X

The scholars of the last twenty years have done their best work in their study of the world and time in which Christianity began. Its relation to the faith and the quests of the classic world has been greatly illuminated. It is probably safe to say that the specialists in this field have so discovered and related the forces which actually combined to create institutional-doctrinal Christianity as to make their conclusions final. The most original and creative work in the study of the historical Jesus has been in the examination of His relation to His *milieu*. The popular lives of Jesus have added little. St. Paul has been a congenial subject, and his relation to the mystery religions has been carefully and suggestively examined. Also a very great deal has been done in comparative religions and in the examination of religion itself. The free mind of the scholar has achieved epoch-making results in these fields in the last forty years.

This whole body of religious literature has been crossed and recrossed by the doubt, the faith, the knowledge and the longings of troubled years. The search for titles has been so exhaustive that one could hardly get a knife edge between this or that publication. Originality became increasingly difficult. Now and then an especially brilliant book, accurately timed to a responsive interest, has had a wide sale and yielded royalties to realize an author's dream. The great majority have had their little day and found their peace of Nirvana on the shelves of theological libraries. Ruling-idea books whose insights bring order out of confusion or furnish a departure for a new range of ideas have been rare, almost any one of a score of clever men could have written the other man's book if the publisher had suggested it—or he had turned his own mind to it. The constant reader has grown familiar with the general range of the religious books of his time and with familiarity has acknowledged a weariness in turning their pages. Perhaps, in this as in so many other regions, those who read this book, recognize the familiar and sense themselves some weariness, have seen the end of an epoch.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE REAL EXPERIMENTALISTS

KIRSOPP LAKE confined his examination of religious experimentalists to Protestant church varieties. Their experimentations were interesting enough exhibits but quite limited in range, and mainly intellectual. They were concerned mostly with the credibility of documents, the reasonableness of creeds and how scientifically trained minds should behave in the field of religious thought. Such experiments lacked allure and adventure and hardly registered in the going enterprises of churches which continued their sober-standardized ways as if the battle of the two Isaiahs had never been fought and Archbishop Usher's chronology was final. There was some experimentation in the choice of hymns, the phrasing of prayer and the choice of things prayed for and about. The preacher has always been a cautious experimentalist in his choice of texts and topics; little change there. The sensitive might feel differences in the spiritual atmosphere—a grateful warmth or drafts, so to speak, against which to turn a protesting shoulder. But even these were nothing for which to leave church.

There was actually between 1890 and 1930 more radical and creative religious experimentation than, very likely, since the first three Christian centuries. These experiments include between them about every imaginable and some unimaginable aspects of faith, conduct and speculation. They have been colorful, continuous and acknowledged no frontiers.<sup>1</sup> One might about as soon try to herd cloud shadows as to classify them but they seem to have been centrally concerned about

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<sup>1</sup>For interesting and informative studies see: *The Confusion of Tongues*, Charles W. Ferguson, Doubleday, Doran & Company, New York, 1928. *The Stammering Century*, Gilbert Seldes, The John Day Company, New York, 1928. Also the author's *Modern Religious Cults and Movements*.



what religion can really do for life and most of all what religion can actually do for the deeply shadowed aspects of life. They were taken up by those who found little help in their perplexities about suffering from the inherited formulæ of the Church. They doubted Adam's fall or else did not see why they should suffer for it.

Suffering had once been thought of as mystery or else a God-sent discipline with a power to purge the soul of earthiness and, according to many texts and more hymns, to be devoutly accepted and even rejoiced in. The treasures of Christian prayers were veined with this temper. But these new experimental times did not want to suffer—Eve's daughters were beginning to escape Eve's legacy of travail in twilight sleep; Adam's sons wanted to meet his bequest of death soothed by some narcotic, and all God's children wanted to be comfortable and wanted Him to help them. For all the growing softness of the age—and the war was soon to demonstrate what power to endure suffering and look death in the eye unafraid lay beneath its softness—its concern about suffering was very human and its perplexity about the reconciliation of a loving and all powerful God with a pitiful humanity very natural. The drama of Job was always being reenacted, the churches taking the part of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar—and Job protesting.

Science brought him real help and cold comfort. It explained his boils to him and supplied him inoculations and disinfectants. It took sickness increasingly out of the realm of the mysterious, but its vast, inexorable subjection of life to law left him a life with which the Eternal had less and less to do. He might rather have chosen to endure affliction in a world warm with the presence of God, in which even his boils and his poverty were an engrossing affair with a Providence at least mindful enough of him to afflict him, than to live an entirely hygienic life in an impersonal universe.

## I

Here is the key to one range of very experimental religious inquiry and readjustment since 1890. The religious cults and movements thus engendered used inherited religious material but so recast it as to give religion new names, forms and uses—also, they believed, a new and healing validity. These have been real experimentalists. They wanted first to explain and then to escape the misfortunes, sicknesses and haunting inadequacies of the average life. They were not scientifically minded, though some of them made a science of their own. They were religiously minded and they made religions of their own. Life for them must still be an affair with God but they rejected, root and branch, a God who was responsible for sin and suffering and the justifications of His ways with man which went with the conception of that kind of a God. They wanted to find loving goodness at the heart of the order in which their lives were entangled, and they wanted it darkened by no shadows.

They shared the optimism of their time. Life was meant, they held, to be one glad sweet song and if its music were discordant it must in some way be out of tune with the Infinite. Their inherited religion had attuned God to the sad music of humanity; they would beat out a brighter music and attune it to "The Great *I am*; the all-knowing, all-serving, all-acting, all-wise, all-loving and eternal. . . ." These attributes indicate the debt these experimentalists owed the Bible but the rest of this history-making definition indicates their debt to the inclusively experimental mind of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy for whom God was also "Principle; Mind; Soul; Spirit; Life; Truth; Love; All Substance; Intelligence."<sup>2</sup> The main thing was to be in tune somewhere with these sovereign chords and

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<sup>2</sup> *Science and Health*, Mary Baker Eddy, Christian Science Publishing Co., Boston, copyright edition of 1926, page 587.

demonstrate such unity in some victory over the natural limitations of life.

Sickness offered the most definite region for demonstration. I do not know that the 1880's and 1890's were unusually sickly; they were certainly the golden age of patent medicines and home cures. Symptoms of everything flesh and imagination are heir to were unblushingly described in the advertising columns of almost any newspaper. The credulous could have any disease they pleased; there was always a specific for it. The period was avid for cures. If one could offer religion as a health and healing specific, the field was unlimited. Mrs. Eddy did just that, and the response was astounding. In 1892 there were already one hundred and fifty-five Christian Science churches and societies, and Mary Baker Eddy was already a woman of mystery and command.

The idealization which drew a veil between her and her strange, stormy past and had begun to leave her half floating in the air, clothed with those virtues and graces which the women fashioned and, inhibited by the epoch which was just ending, had kept for themselves in the wardrobes of their dreams, was complete. Since they could not wear such a garmenture themselves they clothed "Mother" Eddy with it. She had become a painting of Murillo's—with a late Victorian coiffure—and pedestaled on a cloud. She knew how to take the part. Her followers had been summoned to meet her at Chicago in 1888. They filled Central Music Hall and rose to their feet "as one man" to greet her. Her words were "a pentecostal flow of golden eloquence." As she left the hall mothers lifted their children to see her or touched her dress; a palsied woman stretched out her trembling hands and was helped, "strong men turned aside to hide their tears." "Meekly and almost silently she received the homage of the multitude."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Mary Baker Eddy, A Life Size Portrait*, Lyman P. Powell, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1930, page 172. Mostly from *Boston Traveller's* report. By permission of the Macmillan Company.

The subject of this rhapsody was then sixty-seven years old. She came of shrewd, strongly individualized New England stock. Her girlhood had been proud, precocious, probably lonely, certainly subject to hysteria. She was nurtured in an austere Calvinistic faith, loved to debate it, may have feared and fought it. She had a gift for poetry and a love for writing, a sketchy education, was personally attractive. Her earliest known picture shows an intense brooding face deeply touched with unhappiness. Everything went wrong with her; her first marriage was soon ended by her husband's death and left her poor and dependent upon relatives. Her hysterics grew more violent and because she could not sleep they built a cradle for her and rocked her to sleep. She tried mesmerism and clairvoyance and heard rappings at night.

## II

The traveling dentist of a husband to whom she was next married never made a success of anything. He, as a born drifter, drifted as a civilian too far into the Southern lines during the Civil War, spent two years in prison, drifted out of her life and she secured a divorce. Her son by her first marriage drifted out of her life also. She was haunted by poverty and frustration. Her marriages had brought her no happiness, her strong will and self-assertive personality had been turned back upon herself<sup>4</sup> and her religion gave her no comfort. The vital feature in her earliest picture is the eyes—they are almost fiercely searching. She found the first gleam of what those eyes were looking for in Phineas Quimby's philosophy.

Quimby belonged to a school of prophets which could have been found only in New England before the Civil War. They were born experimentalists, healers, teachers of strange

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<sup>4</sup> This is based on Georgine Milmine's study of Mrs. Eddy in *McClure's Magazine*, 1903 and 1904. I consider it the best and most conclusive documented of any life of her. It is no longer in print. It has for some reason been difficult to keep a critical life of Mrs. Eddy in circulation.

creeds, dreamers of Utopias who lived in a murk of phrenology, mind-reading, animal magnetism, clairvoyance. Quimby had actually an acute and penetrating though undisciplined mind. He managed to get some insight into what really lay behind his mesmerism, discarded it, became a mental-healer and built around that occupation a spacious philosophy. Sickness, he taught, was wrong belief; get rid of the belief and the sickness was gone. He dealt thus with the good lady's mind—she had gone to him as a last resort—and for the first time she found herself and a philosophy, a mission and eventually apotheosis. Her debt to Quimby has been much debated. It is certainly greater than she ever acknowledged. Quimby claimed Christ as the founder of his science, called all belief opposed to his, "errors," identified his system with the teachings of Jesus, even called it "Christian Science."

Quimby would likely be entirely forgotten if he had not taught the Dressers and Mrs. Eddy; Christian Science certainly grew out of Mrs. Eddy's association with Quimby. Honors are probably about even and the controversy is of little consequence. Mrs. Eddy gradually found her own place, worked out her own system, taught it and got paid for it. She did so mostly in the colorless streets of an industrial town among half-defeated experimentalists in getting a living, eager for release and willing to try anything. She understood them for she had been one of them herself looking at life through those unsatisfied eyes. Then she made a book of it all, the most remunerative book ever copyrighted by the author, which made a new variety of religion; a blessed, banned, ridiculed, idealized book, read alternately with the Bible by those who believe it, a curiosity of literature and dating an epoch.

The sources of it are beyond recovery. They were actual in Mrs. Eddy's experience, in what those demanding eyes had looked for and finally found, in the Shakers she knew a little as a girl, in the mass of healing, mind-reading and animal

magnetism, homeopathy and credulous drug-taking of her later environment, in her frustrations and releases, in Quimby and Emerson and what was then blown about on winds of speculation. Her insistence that there "is no life in matter and no matter in life" seems a negation of Tyndall who saw, he said, "in matter the promise and potency of all life." Her inherited religion was in the book, of course; she could neither accept nor ignore it so she recast it. It had to be done on a Biblical basis—must not contradict the Bible, must clarify the Bible and secure for its own authority the prestige of august Scriptural phrases and above all the authority of Jesus Christ. For, after all, she was a Christian dealing with Christians. So *Science and Health* became also "the key to the Scriptures."

She passed all these things through her own shrewd, speculative and creative mind; her system grew through her teaching it, arguing it, lecturing and living with and by it and in time the sources from which it came were forgotten—"In the year 1866 I discovered the Christ Science." The first edition of *Science and Health* (one thousand copies) appeared October 30, 1875 (total cost \$2,285.35, of which Mrs. Eddy contributed \$700). It was meant, the author wrote, "to do good to the upright in heart . . . and bear to the sorrowing and the sick consolation and healing."<sup>5</sup> It was later revised more than once and considerably enlarged and rearranged. In the preface to the edition I am using Mrs. Eddy states that until June 10, 1907, she had never read this book throughout consecutively in order to elucidate her idealism.

Mother Eddy established herself in Boston in 1882 and thereafter Christian Science entered upon its glamorous phase. The one hundred fifty-five churches and societies in 1892 had grown to two thousand four hundred fifty-one by 1930. The movement went west on a swelling tide. There was a period

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<sup>5</sup> *Mary Baker Eddy*, Lyman Powell, pages 138 *et seq.* By permission of the Macmillan Company.

during which the Christian Scientists could have adopted Chaplain McCabe's glory song: "We're building two a day." The sanguine "Scientist" expected and the alarmed orthodox churches feared that the tide would become a tidal wave washing down the old Christian order before it.<sup>6</sup> Many things combined to produce this growth. Outstanding aspects of the popular temper of her last phase were on the side of Mary Baker Eddy. There were multitudes of people nurtured under the shadow of an austere theology, perplexed by the circumstance of their lives, wanting to do their own thinking and not intellectually disciplined enough to do it well, speculative, impressionable, sure that the Bible had message and authority and not sure what it was, and pathetically eager for some short-cut to happiness and well-being.

## III

They were the very people who followed the political leaders of the time in their expeditions for some promised land; they were quite as ready to set out for the promised land of health and happiness with *Science and Health* for their guide book. Powell says that the 1875 edition of *Science and Health* "like the King James version of the Bible is easily understood of the people." Perhaps it was; it is difficult to believe that the later editions were or are. Other writers than Mrs. Eddy have with painful elaboration managed to make rather simple things difficult for plain people. That has been the general habit of philosophers—Mrs. Eddy doubtless fell into it.

But what she wrote and taught was never simple to begin with. The whole system owed a deal of its power to Mrs. Eddy's peculiar gifts as a writer. For Christian Science, like

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<sup>6</sup> The rapid growth of Christian Science always needs to be checked off by the growth of other religious bodies. During Detroit's period of phenomenal growth the Methodists alone built about as many churches as the "Scientists."

other contemporaneous cults and more very old ones, made salvation a matter of knowing some hidden wisdom possessed only by the initiated. Such saving wisdom must be invested with mystery and come trailing clouds of words. If it were easy to understand, it would come under suspicion of being after all no great affair. And there must be gleams through it of new revelations which, if one could only understand them, would change life and the world. *Science and Health* managed all this perfectly.

Mrs. Eddy possessed a real measure of creative capacity, an unusual gift for speculation, rare shrewdness, a masterful temper. She corrected her system by experience and was always hard-headed. The main thing is that Christian Science worked. Any system which undertakes to heal the ills of humanity is sure to find an eager and even pathetic response; for humanity has so many ills. Mrs. Eddy sadly oversimplified the deliverance process. All the shadowed side of life, she taught, is unreal and a delusion; the error of mortal mind. There is another bright order of happiness and health, the order of Life, Truth, Love, Soul, Spirit, Mind. Think and believe yourself in it and with your change of inner citizenship your shadows are gone. Arsenic will cease to be a poison and there will be nothing of which to be afraid. This is itself an oversimplification of the system which actually demanded of its followers severe discipline of mind and habit, and above all the "demonstration" of their faith in the conduct of life.

The psychologist has since rewritten a good deal of all this in terms of suggestion and autosuggestion with a very definite recognition of their power for good or evil. The physician has rewritten quite as much of it in his study of hysterias and the registry of conscious or subconscious complexes in functional disorders. Beyond debate some force and way of mind and body together, to which suggestion in its various forms is the key, actually made Christian Science work



in the spacious and important field in which it did and does work. But Mrs. Eddy had the advantage of the psychologist and the specialist. She made a religion of it, a bright, cheerful, prosperous religion—almost irritatingly bright and cheerful.

At least it irritated the churches. They were at first surprised and pained to find it in action among them with an apostolic zeal. When their own people began to go "Scientist" they were alarmed, when asked for letters of dismissal to Christian Science churches they were puzzled. Ministers and deacons labored long and earnestly—and for the most part quite ineffectually—with Christian Science converts from their own folds. When they finally and reluctantly had to let them go ecclesiastical authorities were uncertain whether to consign them to outer darkness or, in godly sorrow, commend them to the affectionate care of another "denomination." The churches did not recognize then, nor as far as I know have they since recognized, churches of Christ Scientist as affiliated Christian bodies.

The churches of Christ Scientist did not greatly care. They had all the fervor and assurance of the guardians of a new truth for which the world had always been waiting. They shared with the churches the feeling that light should have no partnership with darkness—and proclaimed themselves the light.<sup>7</sup> Their churches were crowded and their mid-week testimony meetings filled blocks around their churches with parked automobiles while the prayer meetings of the orthodox languished and there was abundant parking space at their very "chapel" doors.

Time brought its adjustments. By 1920—or earlier—church members responsive to the appeal of "Science" had

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<sup>7</sup>I think it only fair to say that during this period the Christian Science spokesmen were courteous in debate. They were alert in defense and zealous in appeal but they did not overpass the limits John Henry Newman once established for the Christian conduct of controversy.

largely left the denominations, and the movement gained its conducts directly from the unchurched. It never seems to have drawn much from the Roman Catholic church, or if it did that church kept its emotions to itself. It did appeal to liberal-minded or disoriented Jews. It certainly furnished a satisfactory religious life to many for whom the churches had no appeal and the reality of whose religious life was luminously apparent. God was real and of use to them. The neurotic and fearful gained help through a transfiguring access of courage; every disinterested minister who passed through this adjustment period would agree that some of his more self-centered parishioners who lived in a depressed atmosphere and nursed their complaints would have been better off "demonstrating" behind a classic Christian Science façade.

## IV

The wiser churchmen tried to understand the movement. They recognized in Christian Science a corrective of the standardized religious patterns and would have welcomed in their own congregations a similar zeal and loyalty. Religion, they were honest to confess, should mean health and happiness, and they undertook to rediscover and apply its therapeutic power. They had little use for Mrs. Eddy's theology or Bible interpretation, they respected her claim that Christianity could heal the sick and they saw in it a tremendous asset. Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Boston under the creative leadership of Drs. Elwood Worcester and Samuel McComb inaugurated a "movement" of its own which combined high-church forms with a healing ministry and demonstrated its appeal and usefulness. They found features of Christian Science which could be detached and used; and the movement kept restless sheep in the fold.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For a vivid and detailed account of the "Emmanuel Movement" and Dr. Elwood Worcester's conception of it see his autobiography *Life's Adventures*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1932, Chapters XIV and XV.

Other clergymen undertook the same thing. They started clinics (not yet so named), lectured on mental healing, suggestion and autosuggestion. They grew wise in hypnotic and hypnogogic states and other engaging themes and the motors began to park in their church blocks. "New Thought" probably influenced the general ministerial mind and message more than Christian Science but between them preaching took on a new content. The inner life was rediscovered—not as a mystic remoteness—but as the daily content of thought, purpose, attitude, emotion. It was challenged to courage, confidence and hope. The creative force of it was much dwelt upon. People were urged to deal bravely and positively with their thoughts though they were promised more on the whole from such self-assertions than they got.

Ministers generally found they had no vocation as healers and gave it up but the physicians, the psychologist and a new kind of specialist began to let light in on a field whose range and complexity became more challenging as they explored it. Freud added "complexes" to our general perplexity about ourselves. The deep and often tangled rooting of the inner life began to be understood with such marginal variations and exaggerations as always attend a pioneer movement. For about the first time in human history the experimentalist turned his attention to the one central strangely overlooked thing—human nature itself.

Psychiatry became a recognized profession and no profession for an amateur. Ministerial experimentalists recognized that the most delicate part of what they had been trying to do demanded a training they did not possess and began to send their more difficult cases to the specialist. The specialist in turn acknowledged and even sought the aid of religion. The final and most promising outcome, as far as the churches are involved, of this long pilgrimage from Phineas Quimby via Mary Baker Eddy to a finer Christian concern for sanity and

health, is specialization and coöperation. A clinic sponsored by the Mount Pleasant Congregational Church in Washington supplies an admirable example. It was organized by the Rev. Moses Lovell and is (1932) under the direction of the Rev. Russell Clinchy, was (and is) codenominational and is at the service of whosoever wants to use it. The staff includes a lawyer, doctors, a psychiatrist, an executive secretary, the minister of the church and other ministers, priests or rabbis who will come in for their one folk or faith as asked. The staff is really equipped in personnel to deal with anything from a mind diseased to a legal tangle. The response to such a clinic has been, so its workers report, a revelation of the need for it. They have found even just beneath the apparently decorous surface of life anxieties, maladjustments, secret sorrows, fears and unshared burdens of which they never dreamed. (The City of Washington in 1932 recognized its social usefulness by "putting it in" the Community Chest.)

The field is boundless, the method wisely developed may go far toward re-establishing religion as an actually redemptive force in the world about it. It is in direct line with the example and spirit of the Great Head of the Church who had, perhaps, more concern for the weary and heavy laden than desire to be the Great Head of any Church. Meanwhile "The Mother Church" of Christian Science, flooded for evening service by spotlights, holds its dome against the Boston skyline. It is very likely, considering the forces in independent action, that psychology and psychiatry would be about where they are today if there had never been a "Mother Church." One may doubt whether the churches would have been so concerned about therapeutic religion or the alliance of religion, medicine and psychiatry so intimately established.

Mrs. Eddy's last phase was her girlhood dream come true. She was amply housed, drove abroad in a carriage and pair and her dinners ended "invariably with ice cream which

she especially liked." Every word she wrote was treasured and her alert mind still ranged the universe. The only shadows in the picture were persistent doubts as to whether she were still alive—and a suit by her "next friends" including her son to have a receiver appointed for her business interests. She died in 1909, though a few of her followers rather expected she would demonstrate over death.

If the phraseology of an advertisement in the *New York Tribune* (January 23, 1921), is not a generous imagery, her return is expected ". . . and finally, like Jesus Christ, the masculine representative of the Fatherhood of God, She was the feminine representative of the Motherhood of God, will appear in triumphant demonstration of divine power and glory as the combined ideal man in God's image and likeness." Whatever else Mrs. Eddy's life was it was the most gorgeous romance of the nineteenth century.

## V

New Thought was not a cult; it was certainly an experiment. It was also the offspring of New England transcendentalism and Phineas Quimby. Mrs. Eddy took her line, other disciples of Quimby took theirs, the lines ran more or less parallel but the interchanges of the respective pilgrims thereupon were anything but amicable. New Thought was an influence rather than an organization, an attitude of mind and not a religion, though it naturally organized a church and just as naturally in Boston. It was called the Church of the Higher Life.<sup>9</sup> Also in 1917 the International New Thought Alliance framed a creed—perhaps the most glowingly hopeful creed ever drawn, though it was rather a succession of affirmations than a recital of beliefs. It affirmed the good, health as man's divine inheritance, "the divine supply," the inner reality and

<sup>9</sup> Horatio Dresser's *History of New Thought* is the best account of the movement. The Dressers had been associated with the Quimby group along with Mrs. Eddy. Their ways soon parted.

sovereignty of the Kingdom of Heaven, God as Universal Love, Life, Truth and Joy, faith a practice not a profession, heaven here and now. Since this was drawn during the World War, it is a tribute to the courageous affirmative spirit of the people who drew it. The key-words of this attitude of mind were "Harmony, Realization, Affirmation and Poise" (all these movements loved capital letters.) It elaborated spacious themes of "vibration" and "friction." It produced a most considerable literature of books about healing, spiritual states and fulness-of-life books and success books, which proved what a salesman could do if he really thought he could. Sales conferences are said to still reflect that gospel.

New Thought stressed personal efficiency, getting on, a happy confident spirit and a general refusal to look on the dark side of anything. It modified orthodox religious thought far more than did Christian Science and actually became for scattered, loosely organized groups a religion. It suited the temper and climate of the Pacific Coast and flourished there like roses and bungalows.<sup>10</sup> As one looks back he sees all these movements as aspects of the mind of the time. Their common fault is to have underestimated the sheer fact of struggle in life, to have sought too many short cuts, to have taken the thought for the fact and to have ignored whatever contradicted their assumptions. But they were highly experimental, and they involved considerable elements of religion. They are as near as may be to whatever original contribution the nineteenth century made to religion.

## VI

The experimentally minded began about 1890 to see what religion could do for health. Another group were experimenting with Spiritualism. Among these were the bereaved who

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<sup>10</sup> Generally from the author's chapter on "New Thought" in *Modern Religious Cults and Movements*. He read ten years ago an armload of books on "New Thought" but cannot recover the documentation now.

sought from the discarnate themselves some assurance of their continued existence, "realists" who wanted some sense-registered proof of immortality, the curious who wanted to see what a seance looked and sounded like and the scientifically minded who wanted to know what there really was in voices and knocking and table tipping. Nor should the skeptical be overlooked who wanted to prove the whole thing a fraud.

About ten years before (1882) Professor (afterwards Sir) William Barrett and Stainton Moses—a very famous English medium—had founded the society for Psychical Research. The society took for its province the borderland regions of the mind and experience, telepathy, hypnotism, apparitions and such phenomena as were "apparently inexplicable by known laws of nature, and commonly referred by Spiritualists to the agency of extra-human intelligence." The Society promised "itself and the world to approach these various problems open-mindedly and in the scientific spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry." It soon gained a very distinguished following. Scientists who were naturally unwilling that anything should be happening anywhere without their explanation and approval subjected ghostly music to their experimentation. Specialists in abnormal psychology, who held, and with good reason, that they should come as near having the key to it all as any one else, sought case material. Physicians and clergymen were not so coöperative.<sup>11</sup>

The vaster currents which floated all the movements with which this chapter deals carried Spiritualism along with them. They are hard enough to trace to their own sources. Continental physicians were in advance of the English and American schools in recognizing the bearings of abnormal mental and emotional states upon health and the possibility of dealing with

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<sup>11</sup> Podmore's *Modern Spiritualism* is the best authority for the whole field. F. W. H. Myers's *Human Personality and Its Survival After Death* the most monumental study, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1918.

these same states through suggestion and hypnotism. They did not agree in theory—there were two sharply opposed schools in France—and the psychiatrist has since done about what they sought to do, with less dangerous tools. They did open up unexplored regions in human personality and furnish a fascinating material for investigation. All these things were in the air while Christian Science multiplied classic temples in Western cities, New Thought “affirmed” an entirely desirable world and William James experimented with Mrs. Piper.

Curiosity and sorrow motivated the less scientifically minded. The curious began to wonder whether they were psychic and, if the “ouija board” or some inexplicable cleverness of their own persuaded them they were, went about boasting of it. In some circles it was the sophisticated equivalent of being “saved.” And brought much the same peace of mind. Or else they wanted to see a seance in action and get a thrill from being asked for by some discarnate visitant. The sorrowing wanted an answer to Job’s question “If a man die, shall he live again?” in some intimate assurance which, they were persuaded, could come only from their departed. A vast deal of the “case” literature of Spiritualism is dismal reading. Reports of sittings cover wearying pages, descriptions of the discarnate life monotonously uniform as though the discarnate had for the furnishings of their world only ghostly forms and fashions of their old world. Very old conceptions of “planes” and “spheres” are always reappearing. It is all dusty with the trivial.

And yet the whole literature in interpenetrated by pathos and haunted by longing. There are few more strangely pathetic passages in any literature than in Sir Oliver Lodge’s account of the table by means of which the family were persuaded his son Raymond was trying to communicate with them, trying almost literally to climb into Mrs. Lodge’s lap. It was a strange reincarnation of the discarnate to fill empty arms.



The war presently made such longing world-wide. Western civilization was habituated to the use and wont of decorous death coming after some reasonable ripeness of years and had found what comfort and assurance it needed in the churchly orders for the burial of the dead. The wholesale slaughter of youth was another matter. Their spirits had "gone west," clouds of spirits to hide the light of the westerning sun and darken the light of faith also. They had "gone west," yes—but where, and had they? Was anything left but the endless, endless lines of markers and the uncoffined dead beneath them—whom the guns would not always leave buried?

The resultant interest in Spiritualism was for a while intense, more in England than in America and good reason, not so much in France—the Catholic Church saw to that, the Church and the realism of the French mind. Enough in America for entirely human reasons and more, probably, through the restless curiosity of the American temper. Book-shops piled books about it on one of the tables nearest the door, preachers took it up cautiously and with some camouflage, advertising topics which promised more than they could perform, getting congregations of sorrowful, seeking folk—and sending them home with "it might be, better not risk much on it." They would better have read the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians and pronounced the benediction. A few went the whole way, became out-and-out Spiritualists, and there was some dealing with the discarnate on the part of ministers who would disclaim the spiritualist label. A very distinguished educator in theology is said to have claimed Athanasius as his "control." The orthodoxy of any instruction could not have been more strongly validated.

And presently the whole tide—in America—had turned. "Where are the dead?" would not half fill the church Sunday evenings. Booksellers tempted the experimentalist with Freud and Jung. President Harding urged the return to "normalcy,"

the sorrowful were left to their faith, to their sorrow and to time. The significant thing here is the reaction of the churches to all. They were and continued antagonistic to Christian Science though the edge of their antagonism was dulled and they tried a little denatured Christian Science of their own. New Thought they could and did use. Spiritualism was an ineluctable element. Their distrust of it was probably well grounded; it was certainly as old as the Hebrew prophets who were suspicious of commerce with spirits. It was a modern aspect of the old feud between the priest and the medicine man.

It has been the Church's business to order and regulate human dealings with the unseen and eternal: so important an affair cannot safely be left, so the Church believed, to the unguided individual. The Church also believed one life at a time to be enough and conceived its own great assurances of immortality and the estate of the departed to be more dependable than the dubious manifestation of a seance. And yet? There may be something in the border regions in which all these cults have operated of which the Church could helpfully take account. Certainly if there is through all the fog of them some gleam of ways and forces which transcend "pattern" experience and suggest, though dimly, that "spirit with spirit can meet," it might be another testimony to the reality of an unseen order whose existence the Church has always maintained. Very careful investigators have believed there is such testimony.

## VII

Time will likely do what it pleases with these marginal experiments. As far as they have been institutionalized they have given hostages to the institutional mind, become orthodox and standardized and presently will be accepted as peers by other institutions which will "recognize" them and establish diplomatic relations with them—and they will excommunicate

their own experimentalists—of which Christian Science really did a good deal—or else they will disappear in their present form and reappear with new names and prophets when another time is ripe for them. Humanity is about as limited in its range of religious experimentalism as in any other region. Most modern cults are as old as Rome—some of them as old as Babylon.

They have been actually aspects of the breaking pattern of inherited faith and some stirring of the nebulae of religion. Their contemporaries saw religion again in the making and took no account save to protest. Perhaps they did not know whether they were star-dust in travail—or the dust of vain desire blown down the wind.

New Thought easily found a place on its convention programs for Oriental speakers. They came first to the parliament of religions and found life in America as colorful as in India, more adventurous and far more remunerative.<sup>12</sup> Naturally others came either as invited guests or to spread the light of Eastern wisdom and speculation in the West. After all it was only a fair exchange. America had been sending missionaries to India for a hundred years, Mother India has always been able to supply any conceivable form of religious speculation, discipline and practice. Her offerings to the United States were colored by the demand. They ranged from poetry, philosophy and subtle religious speculation to assisting American woman to “spiritualize the body, put on or remove fat as desired and recharge the body battery from the cosmic current.”<sup>13</sup>

Hindu speculation is older than Yogi practice, and New Thought was more hospitable to the speculation. The Vedanta philosophy was expounded by East Indian speakers at the

<sup>12</sup> For an account of the experiences of the Swami Vivakananda quite as colorful as the Swami's robes, see Ferguson, *The Confusion of Tongues*, pages 297 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, page 314.

Greenacre Conference in Maine in the late nineties. The Second Convention of the International Metaphysical League in New York in 1900 heard a lecture on the same philosophy. What began as an hospitable gesture on the part of the West, the open-mindedness of Boston and Chicago in their quest for light, ended for a good many seekers in the recognition that the East had forgotten more about religious speculation than the West had ever known. Such as these took over the Eastern cults bodily and became their ardent devotees. Quite as much came from England as direct from India, through the teachings of Mrs. Anne Besant. Mrs. Eddy secured a scriptural basis of Christian Science by reading her system into the Bible, sometimes by a deft use of words, sometimes by sheer compulsion, quite as often by a free use of the imagination.

Mrs. Besant secured a very credible synthesis by taking the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and reading into it a system of emanations for which the poetry and philosophy of the Vedas supplied, she thought, a basis, though she rather went beyond the Vedas. The result was theosophy which undertook to explain how the "One beyond all thought and speech" became us and our universe. Something of what Mrs. Besant was after probably was one aspect of the mind of an earlier speculative age for which the Prologue to the Gospel of John furnished a bridge to Christian discipleship. More of it fell in with one region of scientific speculation, and the whole cloud-built structure of it appealed to groups of American intelligentsia who associated themselves together for spiritual enlightenment.

They spoke wisely of Karma and reincarnation, sought self-deliverance through knowledge though one wonders how they could always be sure of what they knew. Their advertisements began to appear among the other advertisements of the church pages. They met in hotel parlors and in halls. The leaders changed from issue to issue though in nearly every

city some leader—very often a woman—gathered and held a very representative and stable following. There were no frontiers in these regions save ingenuity in finding a name and more ingenuity in shaping a faith.

Detroit papers in one week's issues (in 1923) carried advertisements of Vedanta, Spiritist and Spiritualist groups, The Ultimate Thought Society, The First Universal Spiritual Church, The Church of Psychic Research, The Philosophical Church of Natural Law, Unity Center (one of the sanest), The Culture of Isolan, Theosophy, Divine Science Center and Lectures on Divine Metaphysics. Among the topics advertised were: The Opulent Consciousness, The Law of Non-Attachment, Psychic Senses and Spirituality, The Voiceless Code of the Cosmos. They were all variants of New Thought, Theosophy and Spiritualism but they were as hard to confine in definitions as to hold, in any fenced space, the wind-whipped margins of the clouds. Joseph Fort Newton called them bootleggers in religion but they did not so conceive themselves. There was, they would have held, no Eighteenth Amendment in the cloudland of their souls.

Western experimentation with Oriental cults contributed a little, and the experience of open-minded missionaries in the East contributed far more, and the work of scholars in the field of comparative religion supplied invaluable support, to a better understanding of the great content of Eastern faith. The technique of missionary appeal has thereby been greatly changed—though that does not belong to this study. The most dramatic result of it is that in the revision of Christian hymn books the word heathen is beginning to disappear.

## VIII

Among the other advertisements in the Detroit papers in the same period (1922-23) was the unqualified announcement that "Millions now living will never die!" In some ways the

career of Charles Taze Russell makes Mrs. Eddy's life-work colorless and the circulation of her literature inconsiderable. He was one of those dynamic incalculable personalities who move across a period like one of the riders of the wild host; through some strange power of playing upon popular fears and hopes and credulities attain a great following—and then pass as the storm passes. He specialized in the end of the world, judgment, hell and heaven and recreated for the twentieth century the grandiose drama which Hebrew prophets and seers bequeathed to Christianity. It has proved of perennial fascination to the devout imagination. And the hope of surviving the last pitched battle between the hosts of heaven and hell and living forever beyond all reach of pain and sorrow has lent meaning to countless colorless lives. It was worth buying Pastor Russell's books to anticipate that triumph. The profits of trading in such hopes and fears made it possible for Russellism to advertise the incredible across the continent.

Ferguson in his *The Confusion of Tongues* notes nineteen cults each distinctive enough to supply materials for a chapter (and many of them would make a book) which have organized themselves out of the restlessness and religious confusion of forty years. They may be an indictment of Christianity, they certainly testify to the capricious ingenuity of the human mind. Very likely they indicate the incurable religiosity of human folk and how frontierless religion really is. They are, I venture to believe, the most telling commentary, in vital regions, upon the American system of education which can be offered. These disciples of every impossibility, these credulous accepters of the incredible were trained in American schools, graduated from American colleges, were judges and men and women of high technical training. There is no comment beyond the statement of that fact.

Toward the end of the period (1929-32) there was a widespread rebirth of faith in astrology. Men of affairs had

their horoscopes read and asked permission of the stars to conduct their enterprises. Evidently the stars misadvised them—but that is a detail. They would have done as badly had they used their own judgments. New York went to school to Babylon and Egypt. Twenty-two hundred years ago a Cretan advertised in Egypt—"Dreams I explain, holding the company of the gods, good fortune; a Crete will interpret them." He could in 1932 have done a rushing business in any American city. Twenty-five million dollars are said to have been paid to clairvoyants alone in New York City in 1931. The confidence that our fortunes are in our stars and not ourselves guided the stock broker in "playing" the market and the statesman in drafting laws; also women in the conduct of their love affairs. The letters of one's names add up to fateful numbers and there is a murky business of vibrations and cosmic rays. The appointment book of a successful reader of horoscopes reads like *Who's Who*, and those who very likely do not know where Saturn is fear his vibrations. In the heyday of science credulity reached its zenith.<sup>14</sup>

An experimental age had reversed Emerson's epigram and written across its strange enterprises of mind and soul: "When the whole gods go, the half-gods come."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See "The Heyday of the Fortune Tellers," *Harpers Magazine*, January, 1932.

<sup>15</sup> F. R. Barry in his suggestive *Christianity and the New World*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1932, quotes Gilbert Murray to the effect that the best seedbed of superstition is a society in which the fortunes of men seem to bear no relation to their efforts: a searching insight. The god of the modern world is Luck.

CHAPTER XIII  
CONCERNING A VARIETY OF THINGS—  
AND CONCLUSION

I HAVE KNOWN one church during thirty-two of the forty years here considered well and continuously enough, and the other eight years accurately enough by report, to be able somewhat to measure by its ways and fortunes what the forces now surveyed have actually done to well-established churches. The steadfastness of its environment has to a degree been exceptional as well as the culture and high tradition which have made its Northern New England city unusual in beauty and social quality. Actually the tides of the years burdened as they have been by destiny have kept it strangely and hopefully unchanged.

The church building has been enlarged, its organ brought down from the rear gallery and the old "chapel" of an unusual plainness incorporated in a "parish house" of now unusual beauty. Otherwise four decades have done no more than mellow a little its red brick and defeat through a generation of Vermont winters the brave summer growths of the ivy which clings to them. Its pillared porch faces the world exactly as it has for ninety years save that the brick paving of it is a little more worn and carries a richer recollection of feet which use it no more. The bell, hung in a replica of a famous Greek choragic monument, still sonorously calls the faithful to prayer, and the faithful still come.

The elms about it cast longer shadows across it, the spruce which used to carry in the top of it a robin's nest upon which wide-eyed children could once look down from their nursery window, is taller than the house they lived in. Otherwise nothing is seemingly changed save time and life. The very



old mountains which furnish the Champlain Valley its eastern skyline have in their calendar no device for the recognition of so short a time as four decades; the serrate Adirondacks which furnish the sunset a gate are serenely contemptuous of human-measured years.

The years have accomplished their transitions so quietly that the people themselves are now hardly conscious of a changed personnel. The living chain has never been broken; family names persist, children and even children's children occupy the pews their parents used. There are still among the devout many who welcomed the new century in the communion of the old church. The list of officials includes those whose services in one office or another cover the entire period. Some sense of the unseen haunts the noble interior of a Sunday morning and the man who ministered there thirty years ago has a sense now of an unseen congregation who no longer need his or any other temporal ministry, but the grace and goodness of whose lives once taught him many things.

This church has been for a century and a quarter a solace and strength to its communicants and a force for friendship among them. It has maintained their moral idealism and sustained their sense of the unseen and eternal. Through its ministrations their lives have been touched with a saving significance and those therein nurtured have looked unafraid into the face of—

"The shadow cloak'd from head to foot  
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds."

Through its close association with the university on the hill above it, the church has kept a brave and open mind to the changing phases of truth and has had within itself a secret to subdue them to something of imponderable value against which time has no power. It would be as idle as untrue to tell that church that Christianity is a failing enterprise. It would point to its own strongly going life and appeal from whatever per-

plexities it cannot fail to share to something enduring at the heart of it. And there are many churches like it.

The arresting thing is how little the stress of the last period is registered in their actual life. One would find the same pulpit Bible resting upon the same velvet cushions, the cushions themselves a little more worn and the Bible showing signs of wear in the Psalms and the Gospels and certain letters of Saint Paul, but hardly anywhere else. The hymn books would very likely have been changed for there has been throughout the whole period a revision of the churches' hymnology which toward the end of the period became very evident. Hymns deeply saturated with the literal phraseology of blood have become distasteful to a new generation. The hymn books of the future are likely to have far less capital "I's" and more "We's" and "Our's." Hymns which denominate the followers of all non-Christian religions as heathen are also disappearing. The more sentimental hymns are in disfavor as well as hymns which speak in excessive disparagement of the vileness of human nature. There is on the whole less melodious longing to exchange this present temporal life for eternal felicity and an increased emphasis upon the social note. At the beginning of the period hymn-book makers, much under the spell of modern English composers, exercised considerable ingenuity in setting old hymns to new tunes. Recent hymn-book making has reversed that process. Editors have realized that the tunes themselves with their hallowed emotional associations really meant as much or more to the worshiper than the words he sang. They are now searching for new hymns of an approved merit to set to old tunes. The result has been highly satisfactory.

## I

Within the last forty years a new concern for worship has affected the entire Protestant system. This was certainly

due in part to the direct or indirect influences of the Oxford movement with which the name of John Henry Newman is inseparably associated. It was also a reaction against an excess of cold reason in the worship of God. Newman and his associates maintained that the liturgies themselves carried more richly than any other vehicle the faith and devotion of the church. They made articulate the longings, broodings and adorations of the faithful through the centuries. They kept religion alive in its more native region, the region of mystic emotion, and they possessed besides a nobility of diction which was the sifted excellence of all that the worshipping church had prayed, believed, or made corporate in worship.

The recent liturgical development of Protestant worship has been naturally marked by both caprice and experiment. There was to begin with a deal of experimenting with "enriched" services, and the results were often arresting, being mainly an affair of unexpected musical interludes and the use of strange and misplaced designations in the orders of worship. Experience, education and constant pressure from denominational commissions on worship have greatly changed this. In even rather simple services some echo of the ancient liturgies is beginning to be heard. Specialists have given careful study and hard work to the preparation of Service Books for their denominations, and though the use of these is not obligatory their influence has been widely felt. Some of these Books of Common Worship are of very great excellence and need not fear critical comparison with the Anglican prayer book, by which they have been influenced.

The great prayers of the Church have been assembled in treasuries of prayers and put at the service of the ministry. The period itself has produced its own prayers, voicing, as prayers should, the faith and need and mind of the time which addresses them to the throne of Divine Grace. Many of these

prayers along with recent hymns will in all probability be a permanent part of the devotion and the praise of English-speaking folk. Prayers are now more commonly read than a generation ago. The historic adjective "long" has generally ceased to apply to the "pastoral prayer." All public as well as private devotion doubtless reflects the questing mind of the time. One may venture to believe that the petitions now addressed to the Eternal are fully as sincere as the prayers of earlier generations and often more reverent in diction.

Churches have greatly changed the organization of their choirs. The pipe-organ has generally supplanted the reed-organ and the piano, and "the quartet" is disappearing. The lonely spaces about the pulpit have become brightly populated with vested singers. Something of the same ingenuity shown in enriching the service gave in their first phase a bizarre quality to the vestments, but they have gradually become the whites and blacks of approved churchliness. Church aisles are filled at the beginning and the end of the service with choirs whose music lends new allure to worship. Careful attention has been given to both the words and music of the anthems, and the average church goer is becoming familiar with classic names in the anthology of praise.

The whole trend has both influenced modern church architecture and been influenced by it. The more recent church buildings are nobly devout and beautiful. Their windows have again become a recitative of living faith in colors whose glowing secrets were supposed to have been lost. Their carven detail in wood and stone gives new reality to an ancient art. All recent church architecture has made use of the chancel. The altar has begun to come back at least in the elevation and beauty of the communion table. Rich coloring and a braver use of the great Christian symbols now give the congregation something to look at besides the minister himself and the

quartet—when it could be seen—and become, as they were meant to be, the confession of a faith which has never lived in words alone.

## II

The newer notes in preaching have already been considered, for preaching must, of course, more directly than anything else reflect the changing religious mind. The muting of the evangelical note demanded that other chords be found and struck. These have been chiefly social and ethical. The pulpit of the last forty years has kept on the whole in immediate touch with the restlessness, the quests, the disillusion and the reconstruction of modern society. As has been said again and again through this study the mind of the Church is after all but one aspect of the mind of its time. It cannot escape the general forces in action and it is very likely to reflect in economics and politics the dominant public opinion of regions and classes.

Churches dependent upon their congregations for financial support have to be careful with the feelings and prejudices of their supporters. They cannot too far outrun them nor sharply oppose them except at a price. It would very likely have been better for American society as a whole if the Protestant churches had been less involved in the going enterprises of their time, and had been either able or courageously willing to oppose to them the ideals and sovereignties of an essentially Christian order. America might thus have been spared something of the difficult and almost disheartening situation in which it finds itself as this is being written.

One must recognize on the other hand how preaching has at least maintained an ideal far in advance of the actualities of society about it. More definitely, preaching has for the last period taken a more creative line in dealing with definite human problems. It has escaped the obscurantist phrases of

an inherited theology. It has come slowly to recognize the complexity of human nature. Sin, it has acknowledged, is too general and too vague a term—real as the fruits of it are among us—for the darkly woven web of weakness, ignorance, sad inheritance, misguided judgment and unregulated impulse in which we human folk are caught and which indeed is in varying degrees of the very substance of our souls. Psychology has greatly helped the preacher here and the pulpit has wisely availed itself of this help. A very great deal of preaching recently had to do with what might be called "life adjustment." The response of modern congregations to such preaching is a testimony to the inner confusions and perplexities of the time.

Preaching has gained generally from the better understandings of the Bible. Preachers still use texts but they are likely to handle them more vitally and with less caprice. They are fortunately emancipated from a very great deal of harmonizing and apologizing and explaining. The Bible has certainly not suffered, the congregations have positively gained and sermonic honesty has gained as well. Preaching has, of course, reflected the periods of excessive stress through which the world has passed. Here in America the Spanish-American War, the stormy movements of political idealism, the ebb and flood of the economic tide, the World War, the disillusioned reactions from it, the growing concern for world peace, the difficult affair of prohibition have all supplied the preacher his topics and his passions. Underneath and through it all the pulpit has sought to maintain, against all the forces which have challenged it, the everlasting reality of religion and the sovereignty of the Way, the Truth and the Life of Jesus Christ. The younger generation of ministers especially have been deeply saturated with the mind of Jesus, and their preaching has had a Christian ethical simplicity and a demanding note which is new in the long history of preaching.

Ministers have not been free from troubles of their own.

In the opinion of the writer, though he has nothing by which to document his opinion save some acquaintance with fellow-craftsmen, the ministry is more intellectually perplexed than its preaching discloses. Some sense of defeat has affected the middle-aged ministers in the smaller churches, though perhaps they are not alone in that. The less conspicuous middle-aged business and professional men very likely feel the same way. The larger churches are very demanding. Congregations must be maintained and budgets balanced, nor have new churches and parish houses been built without a by-product of debt. If the interests of religion itself have been somewhat lost sight of in such engrossing enterprises, it is perhaps a sign of which the future will have to take account that the religion of Jesus Christ has been loaded with burdens it was never meant to bear, and deflected from the ends it was actually meant to serve. The Christian ministry in general deserves a recognition it has not always received for its courage and consecration.

It would be difficult to choose the outstanding preachers among the very great number of capable men who have filled American pulpits in the last generation. Fortunately the preachers themselves have done that for the historian. In 1924 *The Christian Century* sent out a ballot-form and asked its constituency to name the twenty-five outstanding preachers in the American pulpit. As a result, 21,843 ministers cast their ballots and 1,146 names were voted for. Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist and Disciples ministers cast the majority of the votes.

The twenty-five elect were, alphabetically: Charles R. Brown, Dean of the Yale Divinity School; Henry Sloane Coffin, minister of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City; S. Parkes Cadman, of the Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn; Russell H. Conwell of the Baptist Temple, Philadelphia; Harry Emerson Fosdick, then special

preacher of the First Presbyterian Church, New York City, and professor in Union Theological Seminary; George A. Gordon of the Old South Church in Boston; Charles W. Gilkey, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago; Lynn Harold Hough, Central Methodist Episcopal Church, Detroit; Newell Dwight Hillis, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn; Bishop Edwin H. Hughes; Charles E. Jefferson, the Broadway Tabernacle, New York City; Bishop Francis J. McConnell; Bishop William F. McDowell; William P. Merrill, Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City; G. Campbell Morgan; Mark A. Mathews, First Presbyterian Church, Seattle; Joseph Fort Newton, then minister of the Church of the Divine Paternity, New York City; Merton S. Rice of Detroit; Frederick F. Shannon of Chicago; John Timothy Stone, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago; William A. Sunday; Robert E. Speer; George W. Truett, First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas; Ernest F. Tittle, First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois; and James I. Vance, First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

*The Christian Century* denominated these gentlemen "The Peers of the American Pulpit" and published a sermon from each of them in succession during 1925. In some cases these sermons proved to be just more sermons and confirmed the critical in their distrust of popular suffrage; for all that the list is as representative as any which could be chosen. These peers of the pulpit were elected as much for their prestige, their denominational distinction and the force of their personality, as for their ability to disclose in a single sermon the secret of their power. They represented regions, theological attitudes and temperaments in such a way as to make them the top cross-section of their contemporaneous Protestantism. By any test the list included the men whom the future will recognize as the outstanding American preachers of their generation.



Preaching has grown more direct, and less oratorical. The younger men now cultivate the direct conversational method. Some of the preachers in *The Christian Century's* "Peerage" have either retired from active pastorate or have died. Their places are being filled by a younger generation who are themselves the creation of the time for which they speak. They understand its mind and are shaping a message and method to meet its needs. They have given hostages to the future and not to the past; very likely, in a decade or so, *The Christian Century* or some other publication will conduct a new poll and publish the results of it to the world in a new pulpit peerage for which there are already promising candidates.

## III

Theological education has reflected changing conditions. Denominational seminaries detached from centers of education and insufficiently endowed have had hard going. There has been a tendency, likely to be carried still further, toward consolidation and a significant association of theological schools with university centers. The theological education of the Interior has been grouped or regrouped about the campus of the University of Chicago. New Haven has maintained and increased its prestige as a center of religious education, and so have Boston and Cambridge. Many of the seminaries have shared the general prosperity of the period and through bequests and financial campaigns have been able to house themselves magnificently. They may also have shared the questionable tendency of American higher education to put too much of its resource in neo-gothic and not keep enough for the support of teaching. If the economic conditions which came in with the end of the period should prove persistent, seminaries along with colleges and universities are likely to have paid a rather high price for their pride in architecture.

The method of theological education has been subject to

a thoroughgoing inquiry which revealed in some cases very time-worn lecture manuscripts and an outmoded organization of their courses of study. Any comparison of a representative seminary catalog with the catalogs of forty years ago reveals a great increase in subjects, entirely new departments and a wide variety of approach. Theological educators generally are trying to bring their work into the full current of the life and mind of their time. A seminary like Union in New York is really a kind of theological university. An emergent interest in religious education, which deserves a consideration which cannot here be given it, has not only created schools of religious education but left its mark upon the curricula of the seminaries. Colleges and universities have added as they could the study of religion to their academic department. In the Western state universities where that is not possible, schools of religious education have been established as near the campus as they could get and have secured from university authorities exchanges of credits in courses taken. As a result there are now in the United States very great force and organization in the field of religious education. One cannot say the new century has no interest in religion; the interest in religion has probably never been so widespread.

## IV

It is impossible at this writing, just, I suppose, as at any other time, to anticipate the future. Religion is in the very nature of it the most conserving thing in the world. It is the final deposit of the faith and the fear, the affection and the hope of humanity. In one form or another whatever religion has been, believed or thought still persists. Christianity itself inherited an immemorial past. It has continued or transformed and set the sign of its own distinction upon all its inheritance. It is for Western civilization a sovereign form

of the inescapable, and though it has seemed again and again to be about to yield to some dissolving force, the forces themselves have passed and the Christian order has been discovered erect and unshaken. This is not to say that religion has not been affected, and profoundly, by changing attitudes of the human mind and spirit; it is to say that these changes have come very slowly and that the Christian religion particularly has had a native genius for so accommodating itself to them as to persist apparently unchanged.

No wonder, then, that forty years have made so little difference. True enough when one looks outside the churches one sees a secularized society, a probably increasing proportion of people who never darken a church door and a certainly increasing proportion of self-sufficient men and women for whom organized religion has ceased to be a necessity. One sees also, if one looks a little behind the curtains which hide so much, a science, a philosophy, and a psychology whose implications reach so far beyond and away from the inherited forms of faith as to lead one to wonder what reconciliation can ever be possible. But when one comes back to human nature itself, to the needs of it, to the loneliness of it and to its timeless quest for the realities and assurances of the Eternal, one feels that religion has its own foundations and its own order in something far more persistent than the measure of interstellar spaces or a split atom.

There are significant signs against the horizon which may be indicative of the main religious currents of the next period. Three of these are significant. What is known among the erudite as Barthianism has found an American following. Karl Barth himself is a German theologian with a strong following in that disturbed nation. Whether his "gospel" is now being heralded because any well-translated book of German theology is sure of extensive reviews and to speak confidently of Barth a sign of learning, or because it has value for Ameri-

can religion, is still to be decided.<sup>1</sup> It is actually a German reaction against excessive speculation and any hopeful attitude toward the future of the world and toward Lutheran pietism.

The German mind was probably during the nineteenth century the most experimental of all religious minds. Tragedies of the last twenty years have shaken it out of its adventurous temper, colored it with a deep despair of the future of society and created a strong movement back to Biblical authority and away from any anticipation of a redeemed world to the expectation of escaping its hopeless estate only through the door of death into heavenly happiness. After all this is just about what Christianity always has been. If there should be in America a growing and definite despair of the present social and economic order, the "refuge" and crisis conceptions of Christianity might strongly reassert themselves, and one would have to turn back to the dissolution of the Roman Empire to find some indication of the cities of refuge which a distressed humanity would seek.

There is even now some signs of a new asceticism. The more earnest of the group of younger religious leaders are trying to live simply, set for themselves the standard of life which the great body of their fellowmen are compelled to adopt, forego luxury, escape the bondage of things and realize the spirit of Jesus in the brotherhood of the simple life. This new asceticism has its right and left wings. The right wing houses and clothes itself modestly, is strongly social-minded, votes the socialist ticket and drives one of the cheaper cars. It is bravely and sincerely Christian according to the Sermon on the Mount, includes some of the finest spirits of the time and has much in common with the third order of St. Francis. The left wing drives no car at all—or else a used one allow-

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<sup>1</sup> For a judicious estimate of the movement, see *Christianity and the New World*, F. R. Barry. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1932, page 27. I am in debt also to my brilliant young colleague, John Bennett, for an interpretation of it.

ing the unregenerate dealer or first owner to take the loss. On the extreme left it goes barefoot and like the Buddhist monk allows the worldly to "acquire merit" by providing for its simple needs while it looks after its soul.

If there were Protestant monastic organizations it is not unlikely that some of these would enter them; a renaissance of monastic life is not impossible.

## V

I should think the time to be on the side of the fundamentalist, by Kirsopp Lake's definition, rather than the experimentalist, for some period of reaction may be due, but the long future of religion rests with the experimentalist rather than the fundamentalist. One of the most distinctive movements at the end of the period which has had a strange and embattled history is a return to first century Christianity. This movement began under the direction of the Rev. Frank M. Buchman, from whom it took a name provocative of controversy.

Buchman, himself, belongs to the fellowship of William James's twice-born and has been the subject of one of Harold Begbie's fascinating studies of men whose lives having been recast under the influence of religion thereafter demonstrated unusual power. The turning point in Buchman's life seems to have been at Keswick in 1908 and those at all familiar with the Keswick movement will recognize in Buchmanism an adaptation of it brought entirely up to date. Keswick leaders, such as F. B. Meyer, were much heard at Northfield conferences at the turn of the century. Their key phrases were "freedom from all known sin," "the Spirit-filled life" and "entire devotion to the will of God." They were nineteenth century mystics continuing something very much older and always an element in Christian life. Whatever explanation the psychologist has for mysticism generally will hold true of

Keswick, of Buchmanism, first century Christianity or the Oxford Group. And whatever explanation can be offered in terms of religious experience will hold equally true for all these movements.

But there was a new note in Buchman's technique. The mystic's "purgation" became a "washout," his communion with God became "time out" for prayer, the mystic's retreat became a "house party." Buchman seems to have begun his work with college men and women encouraging group confession and specializing in the peculiar sins of the campus. The movement had at the beginning a sex complex which is partly responsible for the disfavor in which some college heads held it; group movements begun under its impulse, such as the one at Waterbury, Connecticut, for example, led to emotional excesses and even to visions. Buchman himself is a somewhat elusive personality but seems to have a kind of intuitive insight into the pathology of the soul. The movement has changed as it has gone on. It has been re-baptized in England as the "Oxford Group," a very shrewd christening, which immediately associates it with the Wesleys of 1730, John Henry Newman and Keble and Pusey of 1830, and intimates that perhaps after another hundred years epic-making forces are shaping themselves in Oxford quadrangles and beneath gray, brooding towers and domes.

It now emphasizes, centrally, immediate divine guidance once the conditions for securing it have been fulfilled. There is an amount of testimony which needs to be taken into consideration to the way in which lives thus unified and freed from strains have been fruitful in peace and power. And here again the student is offered his choice between the psychological and religious explanation. The movement has in its contemporaneous phase appealed strongly to men and women of wealth and high social station, and may be a reaction against the sense of weariness and emptiness of life which is characteristic of

some contemporaneous cultural levels. It might thus be compared with the hold which Christianity got upon such groups in the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries. At any rate it has apparently been opulently financed and these first century Christians avail themselves freely of twentieth century luxury in travel and housing.

The Rev. Samuel M. Shoemaker, Episcopal clergyman of New York, has made his church a pioneer in this renaissance of primitive Christianity. An invitation just extended (May, 1932) to a reception for the Oxford Group at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington includes among those who are to be present members of the Dutch nobility, an impressive group of clergymen, English men and women of high station, and a long list of names which belong to the social register of both England and America. The Rt. Rev. James E. Freeman, Bishop of Washington, is to welcome the group and there are commendatory notices from the Lord Bishop of Oxford, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Hangkow, the late Archbishop of Upsala and Stanley Baldwin.

The movement has naturally carried a margin of nebulous gossip and comment, and authentic instances of professed spiritual direction would seem to indicate that the associates of the movement are not under the compulsion of the routine which rules so many ordinary lives. Also the divinely guided do a good many things which the average man does without claiming any other direction than his own desire or judgment. Naturally men of a different temperament, who use what judgment they have, learn by their mistakes and know that a certain amount of fault and folly is a part of the dust of the journey of life, are critical or impatient of a movement which claims divine guidance for all its phenomena, especially when the guided are sometimes led to inquire rather insistently and without invitation into the soul states of those not thus led. Heretofore such movements have generally broken down or

issued in excesses through a want of objective control. Whether this movement will escape that danger remains to be seen.

There is a possible power of contagion in the movement which needs to be reckoned with. There has been in America no emotional mass religious movement since the war. Buchmanism may possibly supply such a movement. It would seem, from a not too intimate knowledge with it, to be too much detached from the travail and burden of the time, and to secure for those who have been converted by it a happiness to which possibly no one has any right in a world of unhappiness. Its sponsors would doubtless answer that this happiness may become the possession of all who seek it and that, since human leadership has proved so inadequate, God-directed lives are the only lives which can be sure of a wise guidance. Barthianism, a new asceticism and Buchmanism are, then, the three "movements" to be noted in a study of the end of the period. Whether any one of the three has force enough to inaugurate a new epoch only time can tell. It would seem unlikely. They have all been tried before.

## VI

If one should maintain the outstanding movement of religion during these forty years to have been away from institutionalized forms, he could, I think, support his case. The study of comparative religion and the uncovering of the foundations upon which the vast structure of human faith has been built have left their mark. The mutual reactions of world religions have been quickened. The mighty current of religion has begun to flow in divided channels. The scientist in his discoveries and speculations continues its elements of awe and wonder and translates its ancient mysteries into new mysteries of his own. The humanist makes a brave bid for the high conduct of an enterprise which, he believes, a man may carry off nobly, though he himself is "for the dark" and his



inconsequential planet is a bubble in the current of a vast, purposeless energy. The bell of the "Old First" and bells around the world still call the faithful to an assurance of a God who has meaning for their lives and for whom their lives have meaning.

They are persuaded that they are in the saving current of humanity's surest insight, and God's supreme revelation. They do not exactly greet the Unseen with a cheer, but Christianity carries on. Beyond such things as these, which are capable of great expansion, for the essence of the contemporaneous religious situation is in them, there is little to be said except to end this chapter and this study. Religion always has been unfinished, that is the perennial secret of its power. If it should ever be finished it would be ended. There has not been a time since the Protestant Reformation when the sense of the unfinished in every region of life was more acute than now. That is religion's supreme opportunity for the future.

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